The ‘Mediterranean World’

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VOLUME 6

The 'Mediterranean World'

European Power Politics and the Geographical Mind, 1571–1973

By

Rolf Petri

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Venice, April 2026

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Introduction

The present book offers a long-term view of the "Mediterranean World," a geographical division, or *Erdgebiet* in the sense of Carl Ritter,[1] whose individual traits supposedly set it apart from all others. It traces the gradual emergence, between the late sixteenth and late eighteenth centuries, of ideas that associated the Mediterranean Sea with meanings that referred to something other than just a sea. It is a text on how these ideas were condensed into a distinct narrative of Mediterranean-ness at the service of European power politics during and after the Napoleonic period. It describes how the later variants of the same narrative served colonial and neo-colonial interests until the height of the Cold War, up to a moment when Western geopolitical hegemony in the region and the wider world shifted away from Europe to the United States of America.

A pivotal aspect tackled in the present book is the historical meaning that the waters, islands, and coasts of the Mediterranean Sea have been charged with over time. As Fenech and Pace argue, "no other region in the world conjures up as many daily images, debates and movements – be these of people, goods, money or political ideas – as the Mediterranean." The same authors resort to the trope according to which "the Mediterranean has been central to the development of humanity since known history began."[2] The present text is concerned exactly with the use of the sea as a metaphor of universal history. It deals with an account of the past that relies on Mediterranean geography to explain the origins of "civilization," an eighteenth-century neologism that encompasses an outlook on the future. According to this account, thanks to typical geographical conditions, which favored liberty, encounter, movement, and connectivity, "civilization" spread out from the Mediterranean to northern Europe, the Atlantic, and the wider globe. At the same time, as the place of origin, it conserved traits of that better world that the future will bring. In short, the Mediterranean held, and in part continues to hold, a prominent place in Western narratives of Europe's past and future power and purpose. We will try to show how it has served the legitimization and projection

1 Carl Ritter, *Die Erdkunde im Verhältniß zur Natur und zur Geschichte des Menschen oder allgemeine, vergleichende Geographie*, vol. 1 (Reimer, 1817), 801. The literal use of *monde méditerranéen* and *Mittelmeerwelt* began to spread in the French and German areas in the first half of the twentieth century.

2 Dominic Fenech and Michelle Pace, "The historical construction of the Mediterranean," in *Routledge Handbook of Mediterranean Politics*, ed. Richard Gillespie and Frédéric Volpi (Routledge, 2018), 13–14.

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of power beyond European borders as long as Europe was mighty and then continued to do so as a matter of wishful thinking.

The conceptual framework that this book refers to has been set out in previous works on Europe, the Mediterranean metaphor, and Western ideology.[3] The underlying research is based on academic literature as well as primary sources and other documents. The first part, covering the late sixteenth to late eighteenth centuries, draws upon travelogues, nautical instructions, maps, and reports by explorers, seafarers, and merchants, as well as to a minor extent archival material. Some archival documents are used in the second part as well, but philosophical, geographical, historical, and political writings of the nineteenth and twentieth century form the main bulk of the sources. While centered on the history of ideas and concepts, the text weaves its analysis into a comprehensive narrative, thereby making it accessible to readers outside academia and usable as a historical textbook in fields such as International Relations.

If the present book were a text about the Mediterranean Sea and the history that has unfolded in and around its spaces, it would have been important to look evenly at that history from all sides and shores. Commendably, recent Mediterranean studies have endeavored to investigate the connectivity and interdependence between the islands and rimlands in a less biased way than has often been the case in the past.[4] Yet the subject matter of this book is not the Mediterranean Sea but the "Mediterranean World," which from its inception has been a product of European philosophical speculation and geographical imagination. Encounter and interdependence tend to characterize all inhabited spaces, but the tale of that "world" represents them as if they were specific features of Mediterranean-ness. The transformation of ubiquitous phenomena of human geography into exclusive characteristics has served hegemonic purposes. In particular, as elements of a teleological narrative about civilization, modernity, humanism, and cosmopolitanism, these purportedly special features have backed and continue to back European excep-

3 Rolf Petri, "Europa? Ein Zitatensystem," *Comparativ* 14, no. 3 (2004): 14–49; "The Mediterranean Metaphor in Early Geopolitical Writings," *History* 101, no. 348 (2016): 671–91; "Meanings of Europe and Meaning in History," *History* 103, no. 356 (2018): 401–17; *A Short History of Western Ideology: A Critical Account* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2018); "Myths and Making of the 'Mediterranean World': Some Afterthoughts," in *Mediterranean Europe(s): Rethinking Europe from its Southern Shores,* ed. Matthew D'Auria and Fernanda Gallo (Routledge, 2023), 219–45.

4 See, for example, Brian A. Catlos, and Sharon Kinoshita, eds., *Can We Talk Mediterranean? Conversations on an Emerging Field in Medieval and Early Modern Studies* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

tionalism as well as projects of (neo-)colonial expansion and geopolitical hegemony. For this reason, the book focuses on those European and Western discourses of which the "Mediterranean World" is a creation. It adopts a Eurocentric perspective that is highly critical, though, of European colonialism and imperialism.

The *First Part* of the book is dedicated to the leading signs and foreshadowing concepts of the future "Mediterranean World" that can be traced in the period between the battle of Lepanto and the eve of Napoleon's expedition to Egypt. As not all readers may be familiar with the geopolitical constellations of the period, Chapter One will sketch the contours of these constellations in and around the Mediterranean and hint at changes between the late sixteenth and late eighteenth centuries. Chapter Two tries to find out how the understanding of these spaces by the various actors produced multiple maritime geographies, which sometimes overlapped without leading to a holistic concept of the Mediterranean Sea. Chapter Three tries to discover how nonetheless some core elements of the future "Mediterranean World" already surfaced in the context of a process of conceptual transformation that we may summarize with the term "Europeanization." Those elements encompassed revisions in the mapping of Christianity and Greekness; new descriptions of "Mohammedans" and other populations as well as Ottoman politics and administration; the classification of spaces in terms of "civility," "barbarity," and "savagery"; a renewed interest in finding out and visiting original places of biblical events; an increasing curiosity for the artistic and architectonic remnants of antiquity; and a swelling sense of ownership or duty of appropriation of the alleged heritage that was thought to be bestowed upon Europeans by history; hence, an increasingly self-righteous conviction of European primacy, which incubated colonial fantasies and a sublimated sense of entitlement for looting.

The *Second Part* of the book investigates the making and further development of the "Mediterranean World" as a widely acknowledged piece of imaginative geography, wherein the sea is not just a sea but a metaphor for the direction into which history was supposed to evolve. Chapter Four starts with looking into Napoleon's invasion of Egypt as the first attempt, both practical and ideological, to unify the Mediterranean as a region under the rule of the self-appointed leader of "civilization," France; it continues with examining the political, philosophical, and geographical writings of the nineteenth century that underpinned this project from not just a French but a European viewpoint. Chapter Five outlines in a synthetic way the vicissitudes of French, British, and other European colonial projects in the Mediterranean area since the nineteenth century and tries to carve out the role of the "Mediterranean World" for the political legitimization of national projects. Chapter Six takes

up the same question by diving deeper into the theoretical foundations of twentieth-century geopolitics and geohistory; it further investigates the geopolitical semantics of European power projection in the Mediterranean area up until the climax of the Cold War and looks at the role of Braudel's *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World* within this setting. The Epilogue will briefly hint at the wishful strategies with which even after 1973 single European states and the EC/EU have tried to project their influence within the framework of American hegemony beyond the Mediterranean's eastern and southern coastlines.

Why a Long-Term Perspective? The "Mediterranean World" and Its Harbingers

For a better understanding of the conceivably epochal character of changes that appear to be on the cards today, a long-term view of the making and geopolitical uses of the "Mediterranean World" appears reasonable. It may transmit the awareness of a cycle of European dominance that opened in the fifteenth century and came to a close in the late twentieth century, even as it attempts to continue surviving in the slipstream of the US-led Western hegemony. But this hegemony is now also being challenged worldwide, which perhaps explains the assertiveness with which the West seeks to consolidate its predominance in North Africa and West Asia. The Mediterranean seems a valuable observatory, and the related discourses reliable indicators, of these processes.

Epochal geopolitical shifts around the Mediterranean Sea also occurred in the past, such as the rise and fall of Ancient Egypt, the Greek poleis, the Phoenician realm of colonies, Alexander the Great's and the Roman Empires, the Islamic Arab expansion and partial retreat, the Spanish dominance and redirection towards other spaces, the rise of the Ottoman Empire, and so on. No wonder that previous ways of referring to, or naming, the Mediterranean Sea or parts of it also carried symbolic meanings that sometimes transcended the maritime dimension. Therefore, one could reflect too on the metaphorical value of older denominations such as *mare nostrum* ("our sea"), which the Romans gradually extended beyond their domestic Tyrrhenian waters to the whole of the Mediterranean Sea, as the expansion of their overseas dominions progressed. Here, the possessive pronoun entails a logic of familiarity and property, which was sustained by political and economic power and military might. It also implied a sense of civil superiority, as we know, however, only from the context. At any rate, those meanings were conveyed by the possessive

pronoun, while the sea itself remained a body of waters. In the same way another denomination, *mare internum*, appeared to be immediately understandable after the Romans had conquered almost all Mediterranean shores, transforming the sea into a waterway that connected the centers and peripheries of the empire. The ancient Greeks had already distinguished the internal sea as a space of familiar experience from the outer ocean that bordered with the unknown. Biblical names can be translated as "Great Sea" (Joshua 1:4 et al.), "Hinder Sea" (Zechariah 14:8), and "Sea of the Philistines" (Exodus 23:31); they apparently reflect a more partial perception and inland-looking experience.

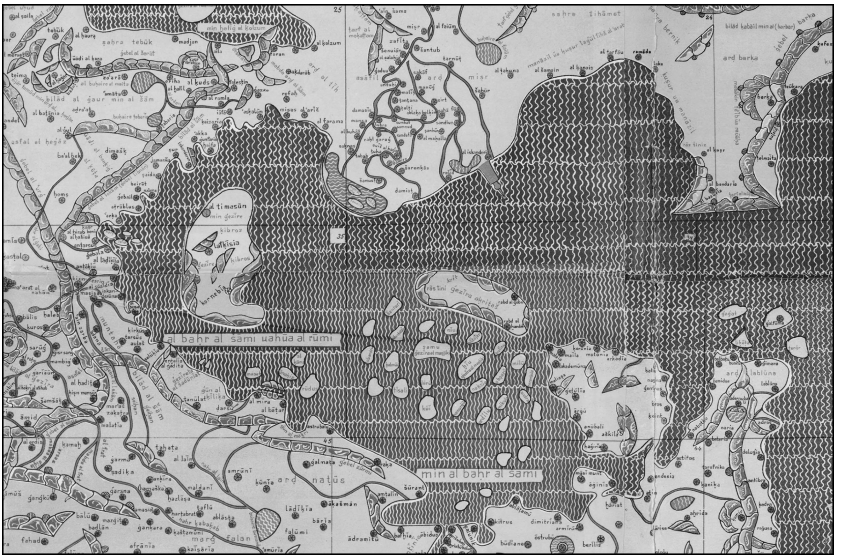


FIGURE 1 The eastern Mediterranean Sea in a detail of Muḥammad al-Idrīsī's 1154 *Tabula Rogeriana* (*Kitāb Rujārī*). Reconstitution and Latin transliteration by Konrad Miller, 1926. Public domain, Wikimedia Commons

Medieval Arab sources used *al-baḥr al-rūm* (the "Sea of the Romans"), *al-baḥr al-shām* ("Sea of Syria"), *al-baḥr al-maghrib* ("Sea of the [Islamic] West"), and other names, sometimes by way of regional reference, other times for the sea as a whole. In the twelfth century, geographer Muḥammad al-Idrīsī called it "the Sea of Syria which is [also] of the Romans" (Figure 1).[5] The sea seems to

5 Muḥammad al-Idrīsī was "the founder of the Ptolemaic school of geography in the Muslim world;" Pınar Emiralioğlu, *Geographical Knowledge and Imperial Culture in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Routledge, 2014), 67; *al-baḥr al-mutawassiṭ* ("the Middle Sea") came into broader use only during the nineteenth century.

have marked a boundary between the "world" of Islam and the "world" of *rūm* and Franks, thereby suggesting that in medieval Arabic sources the sea was not just a sea but also a spatial identifier of confining lands.[6] Although it conveyed meanings that apparently transcended the maritime space, it seems to have emphasized the latter's function as a dividing line between "worlds" apart rather than making itself the center of a region.

The Turks would call the Mediterranean *akdeniz* ("White Sea"), according to a traditional, not just Turkic but also Sino-Iranian, cosmological symbology that used the color white (*ak*) for the Western direction, yellow for the east, black for the north (Black Sea, *karadeniz*), and red for the south (Red Sea, *kızıldeniz*).[7] Here, the metaphor concerns the relationship between sunlight, chromatics, and cardinal directions, while the sea remains a sea, a phenomenon recurring on different edges of the landmass. During the period that we conventionally call "early modern," many inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire looked equally interestedly, and sometimes even more intensely, toward other important waterways, such as the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.

Among Europeans, before the eighteenth century it was not even granted that the Mediterranean would be referred to as one body of water. Sometimes it was correctly described as "an extension, a gulf" of the Western Ocean and as such united with the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov.[8] More often, however, its description was broken down into regional seas. On a fifteenth century Florentine world map, based on Jacobus Angelus's 1406 Latin translation of Maximus Planudes's late-thirteenth-century rediscovered Greek manuscripts of Ptolemy's second-century *Geography* we find exclusively "partial" denominations, such as *Africanum Pelagus*, *Gallicum Pelagus*, *Adriaticum Pelagus* (Ionian Sea), *Adriaticum Sinus* (Adriatic Sea), *Egyptum Pelagus*, and so on, side by side with *Euxinus Pontus* (Black Sea) and *Maeoto Palus* (the Sea of Azov with its shallow waters and swamps), all well separated from the *Occidentalis Oceanus* and the *Indicum Pelagus* with its *Arabicus Sinus* (Red Sea).[9]

6 Tarek Kahlaoui, *Creating the Mediterranean: Maps and the Islamic Imagination* (Brill, 2018), 24–38; Christophe Picard, *Sea of the Caliphs: The Mediterranean in the Medieval Islamic World* (Harvard University Press, 2018), 1–36.

7 Irène Tamba, "A Geographic and Lexical Puzzle: Colors in Names of Seas," in *Studies in Asian Historical Linguistics, Philology and Beyond*, ed. John Kupchik et al. (Brill, 2021), 139–49.

8 Pietro Rosa, *La nautica rilucente* (Valvasense, 1700), 14.

9 Ptolemy, *Geography*, with 27 maps, trans. Emanuel Chrysoloras and Jacobus Angelus (Florence), public domain, accessed July 18, 2019, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:PtolemyWorldMap.jpg.

This map does not appear to be excessively concerned with categorial hierarchization, which is expressed through the semantic distinction of oceans, seas, gulfs, and swamps more than by the proportions of the map or its inscriptions (Figure 2).

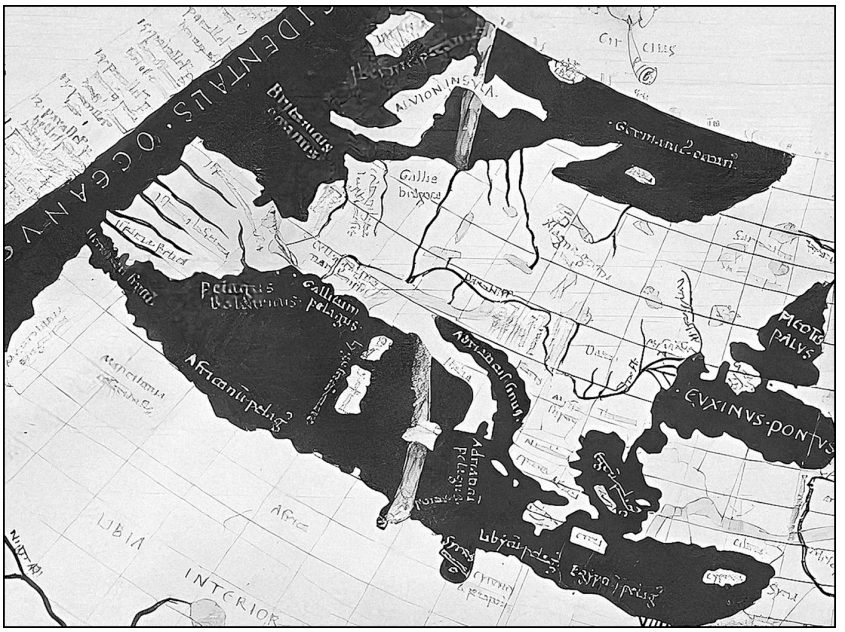


FIGURE 2 Detail of a mid-15th century Florentine world map based on Ptolemy's manuscripts. Map credited to Francesco di Antonio del Chierico. Public domain, Wikimedia Commons

The very denomination "Mediterranean Sea," which in the fifteenth century was well known but is absent from this map, seems to prevail in later periods. However, as we will also note, when observed from different geographical and political angles, the perception and mental mapping of what the "Mediterranean Sea" concretely meant in terms of navigation and trade areas still greatly differed in the early modern period. Only in later early modern history did its use become thoroughly unrivalled, although it was occasionally translated as the "Middle Sea." Until the late eighteenth century, all these denominations, while sometimes conveying specific political meanings or even value judgments, never appear to use the sea as a metaphor but just refer to a sea. Back in those days, the "idea of a Mediterranean 'world' extending to the coast of

the countries bathed by its sea, comprising the people living there and constituting a unity unto itself, was unheeded."[10]

There is good reason to consider the French invasion of Egypt and Syria of 1798–1802 the most important turning point in the invention process of "Mediterranean-ness" and the Mediterranean as a region, an assumption on which recent scholarship seems to agree. Roughly around that turn "the term 'Mediterranean' began to be used to refer metonymically to the people inhabiting its coasts, drawing similarities between their cultures and vaguely and broadly defining a single Mediterranean world."[11] Adhering to the same periodization, the book investigates in the *Second Part* how a "Mediterranean World" was constructed as a separate region mainly during the early decades of the nineteenth century, both in practical politics and academic philosophy, history and geography. By vehiculating abstract philosophical meanings of time, space and history through the tellable concreteness of a place, its events and aesthetic experience, the making of the "Mediterranean World" can also be considered exemplary for "the democratization of political and social language" that occurred in the same period.[12]

On the other hand, this was a too much extended and gradual process to squeeze it into Reinhard Koselleck's *Sattelzeit,* as seventeenth-century contract theories and Giambattista Vico's early-eighteenth century "new science" were already part of it.[13] It was since the late fifteenth century that "Europe" has developed gradually into a space symbol of both Christian and secular teleological conjectures. Without semantics like those, well established beforehand, the making of a Mediterranean *Erdgebiet* in the early nineteenth century would have been hardly conceivable. For this reason, the investigation of a longer period can shed more light on the earlier stages of the process, that is, the gradual emergence of ideas, materials, images, mental maps, and space

10 Matthew D'Auria, "Protean boundaries: Montesquieu's Europe and the Mediterranean world," *French History* 29, no. 1 (2015): 33; see also, Thomas K. Schippers, "Nice to Think, Hard to Find," in *L'anthropologie de la Méditerranée: Anthropology of the Mediterranean*, ed. Dionigi Albera et al. (Maisonneuve & Larose, 2001), 725–30.

11 D'Auria, "Protean boundaries," 32; see also, Manuel Borutta and Fabian Lemmes, "Die Wiederkehr des Mittelmeerraumes: Stand und Perspektiven der neuhistorischen Mediterranistik," *Neue Politische Literatur* 58, no. 1 (2013): 390.

12 Reinhart Koselleck, "Introduction and Prefaces to the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*" [1972], trans. Michaela Richter, *Contributions to the History of Concepts* 6, no. 1 (2011): 9–10.

13 Koselleck, "Introduction," 11; also, Daniel Fulda, "Sattelzeit. Karriere und Problematik eines kulturwissenschaftlichen Zentralbegriffs," in *Sattelzeit: Historiographiegeschichtliche Revisionen*, ed. Elisabeth Décultot and Daniel Fulda (De Gruyter, 2016), 1–16; and Giambattista Vico, *Principj di Scienza Nuova* [1744], vol. 1 (Giovanni Silvestri, 1816).

hierarchies, as well as theoretical elements regarding history, geography, and "Europe" itself. This is important because those elements were not simply incorporated into the "Mediterranean World" but became the core of its meanings. To unpack these ideological constructs, we must examine the sea's semantic changes.

The Mediterranean Metaphor

One central aspect that the present book focuses on is the transformation of the Mediterranean Sea into a region or *Erdgebiet* that represents a metaphor of something else. That other thing, which we will try to detail in the course of the treatise, came to characterize the territorial expanses that border with it, and sometimes do not even border with it, as "Mediterranean countries." At the end of the transformation the adjective came to qualify a variety of nouns that have nothing to do with water, seafaring, or maritime life. In particular, the Mediterranean has become a vehicle of meanings that display on the map the alleged birthplace of universal history and its qualitative leaps, many of its further advancements and stages, and its transcendent meaning and revelation of future destiny.

The Greek word *μεταφορά* makes us think of the physical transport of goods and people from one place to another, for example by ship. In its figurative understanding it refers to the transfer of meanings from one object to another.[14] Metaphors transport "symbolic attributions of meaning through material media, creating a nexus between *physis* and the social making of sense."[15] In using them, we rely on a domain "more directly experienced and better known than the domain we wish to comprehend, which is typically more abstract, less directly experienced and less known."[16] Now let us take a physical portion of the Earth's surface, for instance a water mass that develops, roughly, from 30 to 46 degrees north, and from 5 degrees west to 36

14 Rolf Petri and Anastasia Stouraiti, "Raummetaphern der Rückständigkeit," in *Der Süden. Neue Perspektiven auf eine europäische Geschichtsregion*, ed. Frithjof Benjamin Schenk and Martina Winkler (Campus, 2007), 152.

15 Marc Redepenning, *Wozu Raum? Systemtheorie*, critical geopolitics *und raumbezogene Semantiken* (Leibnitz-Institut für Länderkunde, 2006), 27.

16 Zoltán Kövecses, *Where Metaphors Come from: Reconsidering Context in Metaphor* (Oxford University Press, 2015), 2; see also Andrew Goatly, *Washing the Brain. Metaphor and Hidden Ideology* (John Benjamins Publishing, 2007), 11.

degrees east, and make of it a vehicle for philosophical and ideological targets. According to our hypothesis, this is what happened to the Mediterranean Sea, that is, the geographical partition contained within the above-mentioned coordinates, in the course of an intricate process of regionalization.

In this process the above-mentioned space was cut out by a myriad of physical and written data that were meant to prove that it was a "world," that is, a water mass that united ample spaces into a connected system of interaction and meaning, diverse from the rest of the earth. It was during this process that the geographical division became a domain for speculative notions like the Enlightenment neologism "civilization," which for its own part became central to the Western philosophy of history. Fernand Braudel's idea that there is something like a "Mediterranean World" close to the origins of universal history, which from "the cradle of ancient civilization" and seat of Christianity morphed into the launchpad of "the penetrating influence of Western Mediterranean civilization" and the "building of the modern world," was, by a long way, neither the only nor the first example of the kind.[17] It is just the best known.

The process in the course of which the Mediterranean Sea became a metaphor of "civilization," and its past was not just the "cradle" but a parable of universal history, was a multi-phased process that led to a multi-layered set of analogies, similarities, parables, and allegories. Paul Ricoeur has encouraged us to understand "metaphor" as a more general principle that "operates at all the strategic levels of language – words, sentences, discourse, texts, styles."[18] Metaphors sustain also the conceptual mapping of spatial and non-spatial organization, as well as of intangible and abstract concepts, ideas, and feelings. It is with such a comprehensive understanding that "metaphor" is intended here to help us in clarifying the relationship between the rather vast and composite territorialized domain that goes under the name of the Mediterranean

17 Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, vol. 2 (Fontana Press, 1987), 835.

18 Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor: The Creation of Meaning in Language* [1975] (Routledge, 2004), 17; also, Andreas Musolff, "The study of metaphor as part of critical discourse analysis," *Critical Discourse Studies* 9, no. 3 (2012): 303; *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought*, ed. Raymond W. Gibbs (Cambridge University Press, 2008); Keith J. Holyoak and Dušan Stamenković, "Metaphor Comprehension: A Critical Review of Theories and Evidence," *Psychological Bulletin of the American Psychological Association* 144, no. 6 (2018): 641–71; George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors we live by* [1980] (University of Chicago Press, 2003).

Sea and the more abstract and complex, philosophically, and ideologically laden concept of the "Mediterranean World."

The present book critically examines this kind of transfer. It seeks to unveil the ideological character of the way we talk about this body of water on various levels that span from historiography and geopolitical analyses to the qualification of objects on our dining table. The primary field of our present investigation is conceptual and intellectual history, as well as political language in its broadest sense, where "due to its prominence in public texts and discourses of all kinds, metaphor has been recognized as one of the most important rhetorical devices."[19] In political communication, metaphors are often used to enhance one's own legitimacy or delegitimize the "other."[20] More generally, they are not just means of cognition but also of action and projection displaying a "creative-productive function" in politics.[21] For example, "Europe only comes into existence through talking about Europe. Its meaning shifts depending on how it is talked about" and the way of talking about it often relies on metaphors.[22]

To show when, by whom, and why "Europe" was spoken into existence is a task for the historian. It serves the critical understanding of the power structures that the concept was meant to legitimize. The same holds true for the "Mediterranean World," which is, as we will see, a "child" of Europe. Of course, the power structures that concepts like "Europe" and the "Mediterranean World" try to accredit do not just rely on words; on the contrary, they possess a deep economic and social grounding. That the geophilosophical and ideological developments we will be speaking of were a kind of intellectual surface of European merchant capitalism and worldwide expanding colonialism first, and of Europe's industrial and imperialist expansion then, will not be at the center of our present analysis but nonetheless a part of it, at least to the extent that it would be impossible to understand certain changes in Mediterranean geopolitical relations without considering the shifts in economic power and interest.

19 Musolff, "The study of metaphor," 302.

20 Steffen G. Schneider, "Exploring the metaphorical (de-)construction of legitimacy," in *Political Language and Metaphor: Interpreting and Changing the World*, ed. Terrell Carver and Jernej Pikalo (Routledge, 2008), 83–102.

21 Terrell Carver and Jernej Pikalo, editors' introduction to *Political Language and Metaphor: Interpreting and Changing the World* (Routledge, 2008), 3.

22 Jochen Walter and Jan Helmig, "Discursive metaphor analysis: (de)construction(s) of Europe," in *Political Language and Metaphor: Interpreting and Changing the World*, ed. Terrell Carver and Jernej Pikalo (Routledge, 2008), 121.

Geography As a Spatial Parable of History

The idea of combining Mediterranean visions with the concept of metaphor is not new. But while several scholars emphasize the infinite plurality of Mediterranean metaphors, dealing for example with their various national declinations, our attempt is to see whether the imaginative geography of the Mediterranean rests on a common paradigmatic and mythological structure.[23] This does not imply any reduction of the historical variety of objects qualified by the adjective "Mediterranean," about which countless poems, romances, essays, and studies have already been written. But many of the above-mentioned Mediterranean metaphors in fact build on a "world" instead of a body of waters, that is, on an object that is itself explained by another metaphor and thinks of that world (if not the world) as though it were a sea or maritime region, producing a circularity of argument that borders the "equalization of explanans and explanandum."[24]

Yet, for a deeper understanding of how the "Mediterranean World" was to help in explaining the meaning of "civilization" and present itself as a parable of universal history, we must look into its very making, which was part of a greater European development. During this larger process of intellectual and ideological transformation, human geography, the realm of knowledge to which our object typically belongs, was shaped as a spatial representation of "world history," that is, not a casual succession of events but a purposeful passage through stages towards an end. The case of the Mediterranean metaphor is indeed situated in the borderlands between these two theoretical systems of reference, philosophy of history and geography, which so durably and deeply have shaped our Western common-sense perception of "reality."

The Western philosophy of history that still informs our schoolbooks and world view builds on the Humanist elaborations of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in a process that we might describe as the secularization of monotheistic eschatology, those Humanist elaborations regarding nature, reason, free will, and the social contract were condensed into a philosophical corpus concerning the meaning of history that substituted the state of nature for the Garden of Eden and the teleology of redemption from savagery and barbarism for the theology of the

23 Claudio Fogu, "From *mare nostrum* to *mare aliorum*," *California Italian Studies Journal* 1 (2010): 1. For various national declinations, see Thierry Fabre and Robert Ilbert, eds., *Les Représentations de la Méditerranée* (Maisonneuve Larose, 2000).

24 Stefan Troebst, "Le Monde méditerranéen – Südeuropa – Black Sea World. Geschichtsregionen im Süden Europas," in *Der Süden. Neue Perspektiven auf eine europäische Geschichtsregion*, ed. Frithjof Benjamin Schenk and Martina Winkler (Campus, 2007), 55.

redemption from sin. The new promise of the heavens took different shapes, such as, for instance, that of everlasting peace or perpetual striving for perfection. It consisted of progress toward a society capable of leaving its original bestiality behind and deploying instead a "humanity almost resembling God" that would finally open the bud that encloses "the true form of mankind" inherent in its original, if contradictory, nature.[25] In short, the Christian mission was translated into a slightly diverse eschatological narrative, the central development of which can be summarized by referring to the eighteenth-century neologism "civilization," which we will encounter again. Both its origin and genealogy led some scholars to derive the overall arrangement and political paradigms of Western society "from Christian theology."[26]

However, as Karl Löwith has pointed out, what characterizes the very core of the Western philosophy of history is not so much the question of which meaning is attributed to history but that it is attributed a meaning at all. It is a purpose or end of history that transcends the present and explains it in the light of the past and the future, even in its most secularized and atheistic versions.[27] What is particularly interesting in the present context is that during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, "Christianity" gave up on its theological resistance against being geographically located instead of "universal."[28] A "Christian Europe" that had never existed before was conceived to be projected towards the future and unknown exotic spaces, and retrospectively extended to a past when in fact the thinking of mundane *fines christianitatis* was not even theologically admitted.[29]

The secularization of Christian eschatology went hand in hand with its translation into spatial categories. From its Renaissance outset, modern Western philosophy of history remained, therefore, tightly intertwined with spatialization of history through geographical references. When the sense of mission was gradually secularized during the following centuries, "Europe" became the geographical name for its avant-garde.

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25 Johann Gottfried Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* [1784–91] (Deutsche Bibliothek, 1914), 53.

26 Giorgio Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory. For a Theological Genealogy of Economy and Government* (Stanford University Press, 2011), 1.

27 Karl Löwith, *Meaning in History* (University of Chicago Press, 1949), 4–5, 84; John Gray, *Black Mass. Apocalyptic Religion and the Death of Utopia* (Penguin, 2008), 7–11.

28 Petri, "Europa? Ein Zitatensystem," 19–25; Petri, *A Short History of Western Ideology*, 17–45.

29 Franco Cardini, *Le radici cristiane dell'Europa. Miti, storia, prospettive* (Il cerchio, 1997), 11.

Region Making Is a Power Thing

Fernand Braudel's representation of the Mediterranean as a world region is one of the best-known uses of geography as a metaphor of history. In his famous study of the 16th-century "Mediterranean World," the author writes:

> Geography in this context is no longer an end in itself but a means to an end. It helps us to rediscover the slow unfolding of structural realities, to see things in the perspective of the very long term. Geography, like history, can answer many questions. Here it helps us to discover the almost imperceptible movement of history, if only we are prepared to follow its lessons and accept its categories and divisions.[30]

Numerous present-day geographers, however, would overturn Braudel's representation, denying that there ever existed such a thing as "geography as an end in itself" in the first place. After engaging with historical deconstruction of the conceptual foundations of their own discipline, they concluded that the spatial categories of human geography, instead of "explaining the imperceptible movement of history," were they themselves from the outset co-determined not just by history but also a prejudicing philosophy thereof. According to Hans-Dietrich Schultz, the continents, islands, and other divisions of eighteenth and nineteenth-century academic geography were all but derived from describing objectively the physically differentiated space partitions of our planet's surface. They descended from a previously conceived teleological program, from which geography adapted its interpretation of physical conditions. To each of the continents, this program assigned a role in the universal "relay race of culture."[31] The author further points out that

> evidently Europe is seen as a naturally based "object per se," which just must be discovered and named. This approach hides the fact that the recognition of the existence of an object called "Europe" is depending on time and culture, that in the course of history this object had greatly diverging extensions, and that knowledge about it is no neutral cognition but a collectively shared attribution of a meaning, which to other cultures remains meaningless.[32]

30 Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, vol. 1 (Fontana Press, 1990), 23.

31 Hans-Dietrich Schultz, "Die Platzierung der Türkei: ein Fall für den Geographen?," *Geographische Revue* 9, no. 1–2 (2007): 20.

32 Hans-Dietrich Schultz, "Halbinseln, Inseln und ein 'Mittelmeer': Südeuropa und darüber hinaus in der klassischen deutschen Geographie," in *Metropolitanes & Mediterranes.*

However, mapping the world and assigning meaning to its partitions has never been merely an intellectual exercise. Whenever a physical portion of space, in our case a sea and its bordering lands, is declared to be a "region," we should recall that the "term region derives from *regere fines*, that is, to govern/mark out borders."[33] Whenever we look at particular cases of region building, these display a complex "state of becoming, assembling, connecting up, centring and distributing all kind of things" that bring together "various forms of power, varying from coercive to immanent, from power that bounds spaces to power that opens them up."[34]

For that reason, human geography unavoidably brings aspects of power and might to the fore. And, for the same reason, the concept of "geopolitics" can be seen, at least to a certain extent, as a pleonasm. Based on earlier philosophical elaborations, late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century geopolitical thinkers would claim that nothing political is possible outside geography. That no concrete human action, let alone a political one, is independent from the conditions of its material context, to which the geographical context prominently belongs, is a plausible claim indeed. But it is even more important to underline the inverse relationship, that is, that there is not, and never was, any human geography possible outside the realm of the political. This should be the preceding understanding of cause and effect, as the philosophy of history "made" human geography and its understanding of the earth's surface and not the other way around.

Thus, academic human geography was "geopolitical" long before Friedrich Ratzel or Rudolf Kjellén made a separate discipline of it insofar as "*every* project of regional mapping or region building is nothing but a political project translated into space(s)."[35] This is not to deny that region-building "is about more than the will-to-power disguised as the will-to-map." The present book bears witness to the fact that it is an effort of "construction of identity through the poetics of space," which involves far more complex cultural practices than just a crude top-down exercise of power. Yet mapping the world, for example by carving out a Mediterranean *Erdgebiet*, remains "inseparable from determi-

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Beiträge aus der Humangeographie, ed. Hans-Dietrich Schultz (Geographisches Institut der Humboldt-Universität, 2006), 132.

33 Luiza Białasiewicz et al., "Re-scaling 'EU'rope: EU macro-regional fantasies in the Mediterranean," *European Urban and Regional Studies* 20, no. 1 (2012): 71.

34 Anssi Paasi, "Regions are social constructs, but who or what 'constructs' them?," *Environment and Planning* 42, no. A (2010): 2299–2300.

35 Białasiewicz et al., "Re-scaling 'EU'rope," 71; our emphasis.

nate modalities of power."[36] Thus, power politics and the geographical mind must be thought together.

Understanding the Mediterranean Mythologeme

The narrative of the Mediterranean and its "world" has shifted over the centuries. Yet despite its many variations, it has gradually condensed into a supposedly "deeper" meaning—one sustained also by sensory impressions and the artistic or scholarly imagination, more readily sensed than articulated. Its undeniable yet elusive fascination continues to challenge artists, writers, and scholars, driving them to explore it through ever-new methods and theories. Before probing this enduring allure, it may be useful to briefly trace the narrative's evolution.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the descriptions delivered by European seafarers, travelers, explorers, merchants, and officials gradually gave shape to a new Mediterranean geography in their travelogues and reports. As we will see in Chapter Three, over time their visions began to be influenced by a common self-description as Europeans, whereby the Catholic and Protestant, Latin-Germanic context was considered the genuinely "European" and "Christian" one. In the Mediterranean area, "Europeans" first mixed with, then supplanted, the "Franks" of the age of the crusades, and this kind of Westernized "Europe" replaced or accompanied "Christianity" as the leader in the march towards redemption. "Eastern Christians" sometimes happened to be Orientalized, other times pitied, for being oppressed brethren to be liberated, according to circumstantial perceptions and geopolitical convenience. In its role as the torch bearer of "human progress" and "civilization," "Europe" became the innermost ingredient of Mediterranean imaginative geography. Without the teleological conceptualization of "Europe" at its foundations, the "Mediterranean World" would have been both meaningless and useless; it is the philosophical and ideological backbone of that "world."

In the second half of the eighteenth century, the pioneers of Mediterranean descriptions probably kept Edward Gibbon's lesson in mind, according to whom, after the fall of the Western part of the Roman Empire, its waters and rims were newly traversed by the antique East-West divide, with Constantinople protecting "the wealth of Asia" and commanding "the important straits

36 Derek Gregory, "Imaginative geographies," *Progress in Human Geography* 19, no. 4 (1995): 448, 456.

which connect the Euxine and Mediterranean seas."[37] At the same time, the Mediterranean was depicted as "a boundary dividing Christianity from Islam and, in some narratives, separating the place of liberty from the lands of despotism."[38] In short, the "Mediterranean World," as it was prefigured in the late eighteenth century, belonged to the case group of imaginative geographies described by postcolonial theory, starting from the seminal work of Edward Said.[39]

Nevertheless, as already mentioned, the Mediterranean was hardly ever understood as a naturally and culturally unitary space before the late period of that century, when biologists, geologists, and climate researchers began to underscore the similarities of fauna, landscape, and climate, and geographers and cartographers "separated the Mediterranean from Africa and Asia for being a part of Europe, and archaeologists and historians depicted it as the cradle of European civilization."[40] In tracing the contours of continents and world regions in a similar way, the founders of early nineteenth-century academic geography were following Enlightenment traditions, which for their part were dwelling on older and no less arbitrary models.[41]

For example, Voltaire claimed that "three things incessantly influence the spirit of men: climate, government and religion."[42] Georges-Louis Leclerc de Buffon suggested that the latitude of "temperate climate," where "civilized countries" like France, southern Germany, Switzerland, Hungary, European Turkey, Ukraine, Circassia, Italy "and the northern part of Spain" were located, was home to "the most beautiful and best made men in the whole earth," constituting a human model "to which we must relate all the other shades of

37 Edward Gibbon, "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" [1776–1789], in *History of Rome. The Works of Edward Gibbon*, vol. 6 (Fred De Frau & Co., 1906), 290.

38 D'Auria, "Protean boundaries," 32.

39 Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (Routledge & Kegan, 1978).

40 Borutta and Lemmes, "Die Wiederkehr des Mittelmeerraumes," 390.

41 After separating Africa from Asia by an isthmus rather than the Nile, Ptolemy indirectly admitted that "continents" were pre-established spatial denominations to which physical reality was made fitting somehow afterwards. Only "if there is the possibility," he wrote, "continents are divided by seas rather than rivers"; and when there was no sea available, apparently also an isthmus would do; Claudius Ptolemy, *Claudii Ptholemaei Alexandrini liber geographiae cum tabulis et universali figura et cum additione locorum quae a recentioribus reperta* [~ 150 CE] (Venetiis per Iacobum Pentium de Leucho, 1511), second book, incipit. Six hundred years earlier, Herodotus, *The Persian Wars* [~ 450 BCE] (Random House, 1942), 496, had already highlighted the arbitrary character of continental partitions, in particular with regard to "Europe."

42 Voltaire, *Essai sur les mœurs et l'esprit des nations* [1756], in *Œuvres complètes de Voltaire*, vol. 21 (Société Littéraire Typographique Kehl, 1785), 243.

colour and beauty."[43] Gottfried Herder prefigured Braudel's *longue durée* by writing that "seas, mountain chains and large rivers are the natural separation lines of lands as well as of peoples, customs, languages and kingdoms; even in the greatest revolutions of human affairs they constitute the directing axes and borders of world history."[44] These were but three of the many Enlightenment antetypes of early nineteenth-century geohistory and geophilosophy.

Herder was strongly interested in the "Orient" or *Morgenland* beyond the eastern Ottoman borders, in ancient Persia and India, as Denis Diderot was in comparing the West and East Indies. In the eighteenth century, countless other scholars, travelers, and explorers—including William Robertson, Johann Reinhold Forster, Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, Mikhail Lomonosov, and Russell Wallace, to name but a few—participated intellectually in constructing "world regions." These included the "Orient," "Africa proper," the *Südsee*, Siberia, the Antarctic, the Caribbean, the ancient Americas, and the "Atlantic World." Even within Europe itself, new spatial constructs like "Eastern Europe" and, later, the "Balkan Peninsula" were meant to represent an internal "civilizational" or "cultural" gradient "down" from Western Europe into its backward East and Southeast.[45] Early nineteenth-century geographers like Alexander von Humboldt and Carl Ritter inherited this tradition and its taxonomies of progress and backwardness. The emergence of the "Mediterranean World" belongs to the same imperial and geographical compartmentalization of the globe.

In this process, the philosophical and religious conception of space must be distinguished from concurrent political, social, and commercial practices that continued crisscrossing imagined or real borders. It served to legitimize actions during political or military conflicts and legal disputes, a function that makes its disproportionate presence in the historical record probable. During the seventeenth century, Mediterranean legal and diplomatic frameworks still remained considerably adaptable in facilitating contractual agreements between private subjects and political entities of both "Christian" and

43 Georges-Louis Leclerc de Buffon, "Histoire naturelle de l'homme," in his *Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière*, vol. 3. (Imprimerie Royale, 1749), 528. Commenting on this passage, Felix Wiedemann, "Cradle, Frontier, and Contact: The Mediterranean in Geohistorical Narratives of the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," in *Mediterranean Europe(s): Rethinking Europe from its Southern Shores,* ed. Matthew D'Auria and Fernanda Gallo (Routledge, 2023), 79, argues that the indication "basically coincided with the Mediterranean," yet it referred only to its European rimlands.

44 Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie*, 14.

45 See the related chapters in Larry Wolff and Marco Cipolloni, eds., *The Anthropology of the Enlightenment* (Stanford University Press, 2007).

"Muslim" countries.[46] The eighteenth century's shift in military and economic power toward Europe increased the importance of ideologically justifying intervention and conquest. Consequently, the maturation of this Western geographic and anthropological mindset is chiefly associated with this later period. It made it easier to mark out spaces inhabited by peoples supposedly still living in a "state of nature" or a "barbaric" state of tyranny and therefore exempted from the rules of the law of nations. Their lands were considered by Europeans "as open to conquest and devoid of public law,"[47] and as time went by, the very lands of the Ottoman and Moroccan Sultans were dangerously shifted toward a proximity of that category.

The new anthropological approach of human geography supplanted the traditional post-Munster political geography of the early modern period, the main concern of which had been boundaries of sovereignty. In subdividing the planet's surface into units hierarchized according to their degree of "civility," the geographers highlighted "in varying combinations layer and natural boundaries, climate, history, economy, culture and politics; thus, they gave the impression that the differentiation of the given subspaces was not a product of human *purpose*, but of reality itself."[48] Carl Ritter's concept of geographic individuals and Friedrich Ratzel's later understanding of territories as living organisms or "living spaces" were variants of, rather than opposites to, the holistic teleological concept of late Enlightenment geography.[49]

Twentieth-century geopolitics also adhered to this understanding, since it claimed to highlight the difference between space-related human achievements that were in harmony with nature and history and those that were not, and thus, according to another basic axiom of Western philosophy, lacked legitimacy. The same understanding remained common to almost all spatial conceptions of the Mediterranean throughout the twentieth century. German geographer Theobald Fischer maintained that the Mediterranean was an anthropologically and geographically distinguishable

46 Guillaume Calafat, "Ottoman North Africa and ius publicum europæum. The case of the treaties of peace and trade (1600–1750)," in *Trade and Neutrality. Europe and the Mediterranean in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. by Antonella Alimento (FrancoAngeli, 2011), 171–87.

47 Arthur Guezengar, "Law of war and imperialism: on the origins of the Modern State," in *Waging War and Making Peace: European Ways of Inciting and Containing Armed Conflict*, ed. Matthew D'Auria et al. (De Gruyter, 2025), 87.

48 Schultz, "Halbinseln, Inseln," 130.

49 Ian Klinke, *Life, Earth, Colony: Friedrich Ratzels Necropolitical Geography* (University of Michigan Press, 2023), 81–84.

> part of the earth's surface characterized by ever recurring peculiarities that emphasise its difference or even contrast to each of the confining continents. These peculiarities are so sharply defined that its separation from the related continents and its resumption as a geographical space in its own right is not only possible but appears necessary for its full comprehension.[50]

Shortly after World War II, Fernand Braudel popularized the vision of "a very special climate similar from one end to the other of the sea, which amalgamates landscapes and ways of life."[51] As we will show in the chapters of this book, his approach built on earlier geographies, for example that of Vidal de la Blache, who for his part had been "sympathetic to Ratzel and his persistent organicism."[52] So, we may conclude that the understanding of the Mediterranean that was shaped in the early nineteenth century remained predominant over the twentieth century, and is still forceful today.

In the early years of the twenty-first century, Faruk Tabak presented a geohistorical study, which places particular emphasis on the early modern period treated in the first part of the present book. During this period, the Mediterranean "wanes" because the Golden Age of the Mediterranean *économie-monde*, defined by mercantile capitalism and led by the Italian city-states of Venice, Genoa, and Florence, shifts its center to Amsterdam and later to London. The long waves of the world economy, which were in a trough from approximately 1650 to about 1750, coincide with parts of the second cycle of the Little Ice Age, which affected weather phenomena across the entire Mediterranean basin and conditioned its demographic and agrarian cycles. Abundant rainfall led to the abandonment and marshiness of low-lying arable land near the coast and in hinterlands; populations moved to higher elevations; wheat cultivation declined; other cash crops migrated toward the Atlantic; and trade flows from Northern Europe increased. After 1750, climatic and economic conditions improved, and the commercial agrarian economy "of the Mediterranean"

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50 Theobald Fischer, *Mittelmeerbilder: Gesammelte Abhandlungen zur Kunde der Mittelmeerländer* (Teubner, 1908), 32.

51 Fernand Braudel, "Mère méditerranée," *Le Courrier* (UNESCO) 38 (1985): 7; drawn from *La Méditerranée, l'espace et l'histoire* (Flammarion, 1985).

52 Derek Gregory, *Geographical Imaginations* (Blackwell, 1994), 49. On Vidal's influence on Braudel, see Paolo Giaccaria and Claudio Minca, "The Mediterranean alternative," *Progress in Human Geography* 35, no. 3 (2010): 348–49.

recovered, yet the Mediterranean was no longer at the center of the world economy.[53]

The data marshalled by the author convincingly demonstrates the causal nexuses between physical, economic, and demographic developments. However, the "unity of the Mediterranean" is variably reinforced through geographical expansions or exclusions—for example, by placing Nilotic Egypt "outside the boundaries of the Mediterranean clime." Moreover, although the *monde* of the Mediterranean *économie-monde* began to fade toward the end of the sixteenth century, its legacy nonetheless "went on to shape the general contours of the Mediterranean world in the 1650–1850 period." The present book is not opposed to the study of long-term historical conditional relationships, such as those between climatic changes and concurrent agricultural and demographic cycles in Southern France, Central Italy, Anatolia, and the Maghreb. However, it challenges the circular reasoning of imaginative geography in favor of the unity of the "Mediterranean World," in which—as the above quoted Stefan Troebst notes—*explanans* and *explanandum* coincide. As Tabak himself writes, evidence for the commonality of developments is most readily found "when emphasis is placed on the unity, and forces governing the waning, of the Mediterranean."[54]

A few years before Tabak published his work, a proposal for a "historical ecology" of the Mediterranean was made by Horden and Purcell, an approach that according to Michael Herzfeld offers "novel and interesting heuristic options."[55] It relies on the "frequent invocation of the natural ecologist's terms," paying nevertheless "sustained attention to what is distinctively historical about the place of humanity within the environment, and particularly to the complexity of human interaction across large distances."[56] The authors' concept of Mediterranean space abandons the traditional ideas of a natural and cultural unity in favor of a more complex and sophisticated unifying principle, that is, connectivity, seen as a property of structurally similar and similarly changing "micro-ecologies." The authors claim that we can "never hope to come to an understanding of what can usefully be said of the Mediterranean-wide human or physical landscape until we are fully sensitive to the enormous

53 Faruk Tabak, *The Waning of the Mediterranean, 1550–1870: a Geohistorical Approach* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 16–20, 202–215.

54 Tabak, *The Waning of the Mediterranean*, 29, 38, 225.

55 Michael Herzfeld, "Practical Mediterraneanism: Excuses for Everything, from Epistemology to Eating," in *Rethinking the Mediterranean*, ed. William V. Harris (Oxford University Press, 2005), 50.

56 Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea. A Study of Mediterranean History* (Blackwell, 2000), 49.

variety and diversity of environments within the basin of the sea, not just to the constants that apparently underlie the chaos."[57]

The authors explain the "Mediterranean landscape" with phenomena that, as Bartolomé Yun-Casalilla has pointed out, are "probably not unique and exclusive" but likewise pertinent for other geographical divisions.[58] Connectivity is, indeed, a trait common to all areas that we arbitrarily might cut out from the world map. Stefan Troebst is also probably right when highlighting that this and other attempts to revise Braudel critically so far have not really overcome Braudel's "geographical determinism" and thus cannot help but reiterate the same conclusion, namely "the existence of a transcendental 'Mediterranean World'."[59] So, yes, that which holds the Mediterranean region together must be "connectivity" or some other principle, besides our sheer desire that such a region may exist for the sake of historical fulfilment.

One may wonder, though, why we should yearn at all, as Horden and Purcell propose, for an overall understanding of the Mediterranean-wide human or physical landscape. Why should we stick at all to the assumption that there must be some sort of "Mediterranean World" to be discovered, however complicated that may appear? Is there any reason behind this anxiety if not our incapacity to abandon the faith in a philosophy of history that we have been fed for centuries? The most plausible answer is that we are bogged down to the idea by a kind of mythological infatuation, if it is true that the Mediterranean region, like any other *Erdgebiet* presented to us "as a sort of spontaneous organic spatial formation," is "nothing but a myth, or, better yet, a *mythologeme*."[60] The latter designates a mythological account that is from time to time reworked and varied but only within the boundaries of one and the same archetypal narrative structure.[61]

In our case, the archetypal narrative structure of the "Mediterranean World" is given by the Western philosophy of history and the place it assigns to "Europe." Its infinite variants shine through virtually all of the endless local and national declinations that also change over time. But even olive trees on

57 Horden and Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea*, 53.

58 Bartolomé Yun-Casalilla, *Iberian World Empires and the Globalization of Europe, 1415–1668* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 124.

59 Troebst, "Le Monde méditerranéen," 55–56; similarly, João De Pina-Cabral, "The Mediterranean as a Category of Regional Comparison: A Critical View," *Current Anthropology* 30 (1989): 399–406; Yaacov Shavit, "Mediterranean History and the History of the Mediterranean: Further Reflections," *Journal of Mediterranean History* 4 (1994): 313–29.

60 Białasiewicz et al. "Re-scaling 'EU'rope," 71.

61 Carl Kerényi, *Prometheus: Archetypical Image of Human Existence* (Princeton University Press, 1997), XXIV.

the hill and other "typical Mediterranean landscapes," "Mediterranean cuisine," the touristic sunshine industry, and the inexhaustible essayist production of nostalgia-laden Mediterranean tales add only "soft power" to the same geographical imagination. It is endlessly remoulded and regenerated in schoolbooks, media, literature, cinema, video games. In this way it has profoundly permeated our mental maps, feelings, and memories, generation after generation. Under the spell of its infatuation even academic research apparently cannot help but think that there must be a "Mediterranean World," whether we know it or not, whether we see it or not, whether we feel it or not. Even if the hazardous production of evidence leaves us with no other choice but to continuously adjust the interpretative framework, we will never give up the recited truth of a "Mediterranean World," or will we? The present book proposes to break with this mythological, and increasingly anachronistic, tradition.

PART 1

The Mediterranean Sea, 1571–1797

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CHAPTER 1

Navigating the Middle Sea

In 1811, German philosopher Karl Friedrich Krause portrayed the Mediterranean Sea as an "inner space" of European cultural life.[1] In 1876, French geographer Élisée Reclus underlined the Mediterranean's pivotal role in world history, as "the axis of civilization, so to speak, superposed the central axis of the Mediterranean waters from Syria to the Gulf of Lion."[2] Around 1900, "the Mediterranean's central geographical position between Europe, Asia and Africa" was reaffirmed by German geographer Friedrich Ratzel.[3] French historian Fernand Braudel wrote in 1949 that "the three great Mediterranean civilizations, Latin, Islamic and Greek, are in fact groupings of subcultures, juxtapositions of separate civilizations linked by a common destiny."[4]

That common destiny, however, had not yet been revealed as a "Mediterranean" one to the protagonists of the period under scrutiny in the present chapter. The people of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries that traveled the sea and its shores had had no opportunity to learn it from the texts of Krause, Reclus, Ratzel, Braudel, and other discoverers of the "Mediterranean civilization" of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Undoubtedly, those earlier actors had interests that sometimes conjoined, while others clashed, inevitably giving shape to a "common destiny." But their perceptions of the "we" and the "other" were changeable and commanded by the religious and ideological alignments of their time as well as by the practical requirements of navigation, trade, and power politics. Without doubt, for most of those actors the Mediterranean was a vital waterway in the middle of important lands, and a crossroads of profitable long-distance trade. Nevertheless, it was not yet a symbol for something else. The present chapter aims to roughly sketch the geopolitical setting centered around the sea before it achieved a metaphoric meaning and concentrate on its non-imaginative contents.

1 Karl Friedrich Krause, *Aphorismen zur geschichtswissenschaftlichen Erdkunde* [1811] (Emil Felber, 1894), 23.

2 Élisée Reclus, *Nouvelle géographie universelle*, vol. 1 (Hachette, 1876), 47.

3 Archiv für Geografie (AfG), Leibniz-Institut für Länderkunde, Leipzig, Nachlass Ratzel, box 155, shelfmark 348, Die orientalische Frage, folio 20.

4 Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, vol. 2, 771.

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It was in 1571 when in the Gulf of Lepanto, the Venetians, among others, "gained a most signal victory over the Turkish fleet."[5] Spain, the mighty kingdom in possession of southern Italy, Atlantic islands, and rich American colonies, following the Pope's call, sent its ships to help the Venetian victory before Lepanto. In Venice, Rome, and Madrid the battle was perceived as a liberating turn that "signed the end of the myth of Turkish invincibility and the triumph of Christianity."[6] As a future place of memory, it would become a key symbol of both integration and confrontation in the construction of a "Mediterranean space."[7] At the time when it happened, however, the battle changed little on the geopolitical chessboard. It was unable to stop the erosion of Venetian territorial power in the eastern Mediterranean in favor of the Ottoman Empire, where it had "no lasting consequences for the Ottoman presence."[8]

Earlier in the same year, the Turkish conquest of Cyprus had ended Venetian rule over the economically important island. And two years after the battle at Lepanto that had gifted the Venetians a short-lived vindication, a German botanist and physician, Leonhart Rauwolf, on his travels "into the Eastern Countries," came ashore for a rest in the Cypriot "harbour of Salamine," close to Famagusta, where the final battle between Ottoman forces and the Venetian resistance had taken place (Figure 1.1). Here he "met with two travelling Turks, with an Italian that understood their language." The new acquaintances led him to the Turkish commander of the place, a "colonel" in apparent desire of intelligence. Among other aspects, he wanted to know from the German doctor

> whereabout the Spanish Armada was at present, and how strong it was reputed; whether the King of Spain had made any leagues with other princes; and how the King of France did agree with his Huguenots; how strong the city of Rochelle was, and whether the King took it by violence, or whether they submitted themselves voluntarily.[9]

5 Daniel Fenning and Joseph Collyer, *A New System of Geography: or, A General Description of the World*, vol. 2 (Crowder et al., 1765), 13.

6 Anastasia Stouraiti, "Costruendo un luogo della memoria: Lepanto," *Storia di Venezia – Rivista* 1 (2003): 68.

7 Stouraiti, "Costruendo un luogo," 67.

8 Marinos Sariyannis, *A History of Ottoman Political Thought up to the Early Nineteenth Century* (Brill, 2019), 144.

9 Leonhart Rauwolf, "Travels into the Eastern Countries" [1582], in *A collection of curious travels and voyages*, ed. John Ray, vol. 1 (Payne and Woodman, 1738), 12–13; originally Leonhart Rauwolf, *Aigentliche beschreibung der Raiß, so er vor diser zeit gegen Auffgang inn die Morgenländer, fürnemlich Syriam, Iudaeam, Arabiam, Mesopotamiam, Babyloniam, Assyriam, Armeniam etc. nicht ohne geringe mühe unnd grosse gefahr selbst volbracht* (Reinmichel, 1582).

The Ottoman official proved to be well informed about political changes and aware of the relevance for the Empire of the religious struggles that were developing on the Atlantic shores, about 3,000 kilometres north-west of his own location.[10] Probably, he would have been equally interested in learning from a merchant returning from Aleppo about the latest news regarding the struggles between the Sultan's allies and Persian or Portuguese forces that at the time were competing for influence in the Persian Gulf and around the Strait of Hormuz—that is, also in distant places, which, however, were closer to Cyprus than La Rochelle was.



FIGURE 1.1 Leonhart Rauwolf's arrival in the Levant, 1573. Cover image of his travelogue *Aigentliche beschreibung der Raiß* (*1582*). Public domain, Wikimedia Commons

The encounters and events in the Mediterranean cannot, therefore, be viewed in isolation. As a crossroads of trade routes and a theater of imperial power shifts across the continents and oceans, the area was part of processes that extended far beyond it. The most significant of these was the emergence of what Samir Saul calls "colonial imperialism," which originally emanated from the Iberian Peninsula. This shift saw imperial expansion, driven by merchant capitalism, move onto the world's oceans and from there into newly conquered colonies, whose natural wealth and labor forces were plundered by European powers and potentiated by European settlers and their African

10 For the historical context, see Franco Cardini, *Europa e Islam. Storia di un malinteso* (Laterza, 1999), 227–41.

slaves. In the process, the trading monopoly of the Mediterranean hub, centered on Venice, was lost in favor of Iberian and Northern European maritime commerce. Ships, particularly Portuguese vessels circumnavigating Africa, increasingly brought spices and manufactured goods from Asia across the Atlantic to Europe, rather than via the overland routes through Western Asia or Egypt and the Mediterranean. This was to the detriment of the trading margins that had brought exceptional wealth to the Italian city-states for centuries. Worldwide trade and its associated manufacturing progressively shifted their center of gravity toward Northwestern Europe, presenting opportunities for Flanders, France, the Netherlands, and England.[11]

The Iberian expansion "revealed the socioeconomic transformation underpinning the emergence of capitalism and the dynamism of a commercial bourgeoisie ready to broaden the scope of its business,"[12] a policy that was initially reflected in the consolidation of dynastic states with the aid of financial capital. Colonial imperialism acquired a new, even more aggressive character with the rise of France, the Netherlands, and England. In the seventeenth century, the Protestant Dutch succeeded in largely seizing the Portuguese trade with Asia, which had been secured by papal and monopoly privileges, before England also appeared on the scene, having in the meantime wrested dominance in the Baltic and North Sea trades from the Dutch: "England practiced mercantilism *avant le lettre*, a militant and unabashed economic nationalism, to shake off the Dutch hold and establish its own."[13] The Anglo-Spanish rivalry in the seventeenth century and the Anglo-French rivalry, which culminated in the Seven Years' War in the eighteenth century, characterized a new era of maritime powers during which the state sustained commercial gains and monopoly rents, manufacture, land rent, and colonisation. "Mercantilist colonial imperialism was that of maritime powers imposing their hegemony and soon subjugating the old land empires."[14]

These dynamics were reflected within the Mediterranean, where the principal state actors in the story narrated in the first part of this book, the greater and smaller empires, interacted, displaying significant differences among them. According to Saul, imperialism denotes "a system of international economic transfers based on extra-economic means."[15] This definition appears readily operable at first glance, but it also raises some questions. For instance:

11 Samir Saul, *Imperialism: As Rampant Today as in the Past* (Baraka Books, 2025), 47–53.
12 Saul, *Imperialism*, 67.
13 Saul, *Imperialism*, 85.
14 Saul, *Imperialism*, 97.
15 Saul, *Imperialism*, 97.

what can be meant by "international" before the advent of the modern nation-state? Does it only apply to resources transferred from outside the territory of imperial sovereignty? This could imply that traditional dynastic empires, after consolidating their conquered territories and integrating the power structures found there into their state apparatus, would lose their imperialist character. Indeed, there is a plausible case to be made for this. Maria Fusaro points out that "the 'nature' of empire and the 'manner' of acquisition" ought to be distinguished, as the consolidation of imperial power can alter or entrench power structures in various ways. She suggests evaluating the integration of peripheral elites by whether they become "real stakeholders of the empire" and its political economy, or whether they remain the target of a separate treatment.[16] If there is any general rule to be drawn, the former scenario appears more characteristic of traditional dynastic empires, while the latter is more typical of emerging colonial capitalism and mercantilist imperialism.

On the other hand, the clear-cut distinction between economic and extra-economic structures appears more conceptual than practical in character. Economic processes—such as unequal exchange through asymmetric terms of trade or financial indebtedness—represent market mechanisms of imperialist exploitation that were practiced throughout modern history and were not only typical of the free-trade imperialism of the early nineteenth century. Nonetheless, they were usually linked, as either a cause or an effect, to imbalances in the distribution of political and military power. Indeed, the political, economic, military, and cultural spheres always interact. As Saul emphasizes for the late Middle Ages and early modern period: "From being essentially politico-military, imperialism became economic-politico-military. From primarily state-based, it mutated into a field of concerted action between the state and private economic interests."[17]

It would seem that during the period under scrutiny in this chapter, sea-based imperial powers and consolidated land-based empires followed different politico-economic paths in the Mediterranean context. The Habsburg Monarchy, which was territorially centred around Austria, Bohemia, and Hungary, retained a traditional imperial character compared to the Atlantic powers. It was nevertheless subject to the broader economic and legal transformations that swept Europe after the fourteenth century, including the increasing monetization of agricultural production and rents, and legal changes

16 Maria Fusaro, *Political Economies of Empire in the Early Modern Mediterranean. The Decline of Venice and the Rise of England 1450–1700* (Cambridge University Press, 2015), 16, 20.

17 Saul, *Imperialism*, 47.

conducive to private property and commerce. Concurrently, the emergence of absolute monarchy and the financial needs of warfare necessitated more centralized forms of fiscality and administration. The Habsburg dynasty's nearly two-century rule over Spain and its prolonged control of the Southern Netherlands—and thus its partial involvement in colonial trade—contributed to the commercial and proto-industrial transformation of its economy, notwithstanding the Empire's pronounced territorial and economic heterogeneity. On the eve of industrialization in the eighteenth century, the imperatives of centralization drove the comprehensive fiscal and administrative reforms under Maria Theresa.[18] Prior to this, Saul's "mercantilist imperialism" can be considered incipient, at most. On the whole, the Empire functioned as a traditional continental polity, emphasizing internal stability and integration through the granting of limited autonomy.

According to Dominic Lieven, the tsarist polity was also a "dynastic and aristocratic empire" that managed to incorporate "non-Russian aristocracies into the Russian imperial elite." Compared to its Habsburg rival, it was characterized by a longer-lasting phase of territorial expansion, as well as the more successful construction of a centralized authority that integrated local power elites. Due to spatial contiguity, the colonization of the Eurasian steppe and Siberia took different forms from the overseas colonization of the maritime empires. While Russia was a relatively weak neighbor during the heyday of the Ottoman Empire and even in the seventeenth century, in the eighteenth century, following its victory over Sweden, it developed into a major threat to Ottoman interests in the Black Sea basin and the Caucasus. It was the devastating defeats against Russia in the years 1768–74 that compelled the Ottoman Empire, for the first time, to acknowledge its own weaknesses—weaknesses that England and France had already been anticipating.[19]

For centuries, the Ottoman Empire stood out as the largest and most powerful imperial polity on Mediterranean shores. Its economy and governance were rooted in a distinct tributary mode of production, where the state extracted agricultural surplus through taxation rather than feudal rents. This system was defined by state-owned land (*miri*), non-hereditary prebendal grants of land (*timar*), and then tax farming (*iltizām*). In manufacturing and trade, guilds and internal customs regulated the markets. Similarly to the previous cases, even within this traditional structure, tendencies toward the mon-

18 Simon Adler, *Political Economy in the Habsburg Monarchy 1750–1774: The Contribution of Ludwig Zinzendorf* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 3.

19 Dominic Lieven, "Russia as empire and periphery," in *The Cambridge History of Russia*, vol. 2, ed. Dominic Lieven (Cambridge University Press, 2015), 9–26; quotations at pages 18, 21.

etization and privatization of the institutional and contractual arrangements were already manifesting (e.g. from *iltizām* to life-term tax farming, called *malikâne* and the transformation of *miri* into *mülk*, that is, private land). As Molly Greene has pointed out, during its phase of expansion the Empire possessed, first of all,

> an extraordinary ability to find those few local residents who were willing and able to keep vast territories friendly to the House of Osman. Second, the Ottoman imperial administration had an uncanny knack for going into a newly conquered area and figuring out how things were done there. Having read the local landscape, it would adjust imperial rule accordingly. In short, the extraordinary sensitivity of the Ottoman elite to local conditions allowed them to build an empire across three continents that endured for many centuries. [During this period,] the territory of the empire remained relatively stable until the beginning of the nineteenth century.[20]

Throughout its long existence, the Ottoman polity was engaged in a constant effort to maintain and adjust the balance between centralization and the devolution of power. As Thomas Gallant observes, "Devolving some power and allocating some administrative functions to the provincial level can also strengthen an empire, so long as the state can control and hold accountable local-level functionaries."[21] It was this continual adaptation of power balances —which had to accommodate a diverse array of religious, linguistic, and territorial communities and safeguard the "strength and vitality of local society"— that characterized the empire's internal political and economic dynamics.[22]

So, to achieve the extraction of resources via extra-economic means—to stick with Saul's definition—the Ottoman imperial system, like other traditional empires, relied on a phase of territorial expansion, after which the new tributary territories were integrated and consolidated. This did not exclude further occasional expansionist moves driven by economic motives. Similar initiatives were on the cards for many actors. For example, in the sixteenth century, the Moroccan Sultanate expanded into the Niger Basin and Sahel to seize control of the Songhai Empire's lucrative revenues drawn from the trans-Saharan trade routes. Such events were common in all lands neighboring the

20 Molly Greene, "The Ottoman Experience," *Daedalus* 134, no. 2 (2005): 88–89.

21 Thomas W. Gallant, *The Edinburgh History of the Greeks, 1768 to 1913: The Long Nineteenth Century* (Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 33.

22 Molly Greene, *A Shared World: Christians and Muslims in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Princeton University Press, 2000), 10.

Mediterranean Sea, but they were no longer the defining features of the Ottoman system. By contrast, the distinct new quality of Western European "mercantilist imperialism" lay in its pursuit of militarily secured trans-oceanic trade monopolies and colonial land grabs. The impact of this shift was ultimately felt even within the Mediterranean. As Nabil Matar underlines, no "discussion of the early modern relations between the two sides of the Mediterranean is complete if it ignores the emergent expansionist ideology of Spain, France, Portugal, and England/Britain, and the piratical depredations of those powers, along with Italy and Malta."[23]

While the Dutch, Danes, and others also belong on the list of mercantile-piratical predators in the Mediterranean, the term "Italy" needs qualification. In the early modern period, Italy was a geographical and linguistic concept that consisted politically of a fragmented patchwork of states, most of which were dependent on larger powers—a condition that even applied to the Papal States, whose theoretically guaranteed support by Catholic great powers was subject to negotiation, shifting alliances, and geopolitical intrigue. Economically, however, Italy was a crucible of early modern capitalism, home to advanced banking, manufacturing, and intercontinental trade hubs.

By the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, only Genoa and Venice survived from the medieval maritime republics as significant independent powers, while Florence/Tuscany emerged as a new maritime commercial hub after creating the free port of Livorno. During the preceding Golden Age of the Mediterranean *économie-monde*, the Italian city-states had dominated Mediterranean trade in both commodities and capital, and with it, maritime shipping and technology. It was by no means accidental that a lingua franca emerged among merchants and seamen that was based upon Italian, and that it remained widespread even during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. According to Faruk Tabak, Genoa, Venice, and Florence formed even beyond the Golden Age "the ligaments of the Mediterranean world."[24] In fact, their position changed during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as the center of geopolitical and geoeconomic gravity shifted further towards the Atlantic—a shift that included the relocation of lucrative cash-crop cultivation, in which the Italian merchant republics themselves had held a stake. The decline in the relative importance of trade led their economic elites to invest in land improvement, agricultural production, and landownership. Despite their loss of specific weight, these three Italian powers remained sig-

23 Nabil Matar, *Europe Through Arab Eyes, 1578–1727* (Columbia University Press, 2009), 18.
24 Tabak, *The Waning of the Mediterranean*, 37.

nificant as economic, financial, and political forces right up to the threshold of the French Revolution.

Tabak refers to Venice and Genoa as "twin city-states" which—even after the de facto division of the Mediterranean into a Spanish-dominated West and an Ottoman-dominated East—he suggests performed analogous and complementary functions vis-à-vis their respective leading powers (while Florence played a similar role within the rising French and English spheres of influence).[25] This symmetry is not entirely convincing. Genoa's relationship with Spain can hardly be compared to Venice's relationship with the Ottoman Empire. The latter was in many respects symbiotic and, over extended periods, cooperative, though at many other times it was strained or hostile. The two powers fought bitter wars over territorial possessions, and their border conflicts were endemic. In the period under consideration, Genoese colonial holdings in the Mediterranean were essentially confined to Corsica (directly administered by the taxes exacting *Casa delle compere e dei banchi di San Giorgio*), whereas the Venetian holdings mainly included territories of the former Byzantine Empire. While the Serenissima had to contend with the ostensibly complementary Ottoman Empire for the possession of these territories, Spain respected and defended Genoese claims to Corsica. Genoese trade and navigation were, from the very beginning—since the explorations of Lancelotto Malocello in the late thirteenth century—closely tied to Iberian colonial expansion into the Atlantic.

Not only were Genoese commercial traders and seafarers deeply enmeshed in the colonial enterprises, particularly those of the Spanish Crown, but so were the powerful Genoese banks: "For it was, in part, Genoese mercantile and financial might that allowed the Castilian throne to expand its territorial holdings across the Atlantic, paving the way for the colonization and settlement of the islands that peppered it."[26] Other Italian enterprises also participated in, among other ventures, establishing plantations in the Atlantic islands. Florence maintained maritime bases in the Atlantic and was significantly involved in Portuguese expansion: "Noteworthy, the merchant-bankers of Florence invested in the early establishment of Portugal's trading empire and through their network of collaborators and partners, they acquired a dominant position in the Madeiran sugar trade."[27]

25 Tabak, *The Waning of the Mediterranean*, 25.

26 Tabak, *The Waning of the Mediterranean*, 34.

27 José Damião Rodrigues, "Widening the Ocean: Eastern Atlantic Islands in the Making of Early-Modern Atlantic," *Comparativ* 26, no. 5 (2016): 83.

While Genoa redefined its role by shifting the focus of its economy from maritime commerce to finance, Venice endeavored to remain faithful to its role as a maritime trading and military power. After all, it was upon this foundation that its hegemony had been built over the Levantine and Asian trade passing through the Mediterranean to Europe—a dominance which, following the end of the Fourth Crusade in 1204, had multiplied its wealth, power, and territorial expansion. But this adherence to tradition might appear anachronistic, given that Venice lost its approximate monopoly over the Levant trade following the Portuguese circumnavigation of Africa. In the ensuing period, the Northern Sea powers not only supplanted Venice's former role in the sea trade with Europe, but they also wrested a growing share of the remaining Levant trade from Venetian hands, eventually competing with the old maritime republic even in the context of Mediterranean intraregional traffic.[28]

If Venice's adherence to the old scheme did constitute an anachronism, it was nevertheless understandable in a certain sense, for the maritime commercial empire that the city-state had constructed in the late Middle Ages was, as such, far from being a superseded model in the modern era. On the contrary, as Samir Saul observes: "In the hands of a merchant oligarchy, Venice constituted the forerunner of the capitalist state."[29] In this respect, it anticipated on a regional scale many of the characteristics that the Western European powers, in the age of mercantile imperialism, would carry across the oceans. Maria Fusaro has elucidated the historical transition into this new imperial paradigm not only by comparing the structural features of Venetian and English commercial imperialism but also by explaining, through their direct interactions, why the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries witnessed Britain in ascent and Venice in decline. Over time, the coherent linkage between Venetian maritime and colonial trade, on the one hand, and political action, on the other, became loosened: "the Venetian government developed a veritable obsession with the needs of defence, and consequently the need to defend its maritime empire became more important than its effective management."[30]

The local landlords, the Greek and Jewish merchants, the Greek shipowners and captains—who were also interconnected with trading communities within the Ottoman Empire and who undoubtedly played a pivotal role in the Venetian maritime and colonial economy—came to realize that the

28 Fusaro, *Political Economies of Empire*, 4–10, 83–109, 175–79.

29 Saul, *Imperialism*, 47.

30 Fusaro, *Political Economies of Empire*, 20.

city-state no longer prioritized their interests thoroughly. With increasing frequency, they found pathways to more lucrative commerce through British trading power. Even the cash crops of Venice's overseas possessions thus found more direct routes to Northern Europe. After the sixteenth century, Britain came to embody that close articulation between trade and state which had once distinguished Venice but which was now in abeyance. Throughout the period considered in this chapter, according to Fusaro, "while talking like a commercial empire, Venice was acting like a territorial empire."[31]

In light of the successful penetration of the European mercantilist imperialism into the Mediterranean Sea, the question of the connection between power politics and ideological representation arises beyond the Venetian context as well. As Nabil Matar emphasizes with regard to North Africa, the conceptions of Europeans prevalent there did not consist of "inaccurate or fantastical representations about the *nasra* [*naṣārā,* Christian]. Despite military losses and religious anxiety caused by European ascendency, the Magharibi did not employ historically or ethically generated models that demonized their enemies."[32] This suggests that, apart from the memory of the Catholic Crusades, there was no equivalent to Western stereotypical and demonizing Orientalism in the Arab world. This held true even on the religious plane, where Western Europeans, contrary to their self-perception, were not perceived as the sole or definitive representatives of Christianity. What we might admire on an intellectual level as a form of open-mindedness, however, more than once proved to be a disadvantage in terms of power politics. The failure to grasp the full extent of the greed, cynicism, and ruthlessness fueling modern capitalist expansionism led Morocco and various actors in the Ottoman Empire (alongside others across Asia, Africa, and the Americas) to adopt fatal strategies. They not only sought to play European powers against one another but also entered into alliances with them against their own regional or local rivals. Over the ensuing centuries, such strategic miscalculations would, most of the time, only hasten their own downfall and subjugation.

The European mercantile and military fleets defined their strategies in the Mediterranean mainly according to the geopolitical interests of their merchant classes, interests that were to various degrees different and determined by extra-Mediterranean developments. This may be one of the reasons why the Mediterranean's practical experience and perception remained fragmentary for a long time. This fragmentary perception, combined with the broader

31 Fusaro, *Political Economies of Empire*, 351.

32 Matar, *Europe Through Arab Eyes*, 70.

logics of transit trade facilitated by extra-Mediterranean fleets, initially hindered rather than fostered the emergence of a "Mediterranean World."[33]

Yet the intensifying water traffic also increased the need for an overall mapping of the sea. From the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries new physical descriptions emerged, like the 1700 *Nautica rilucente* by geographer Pietro Rosa, who wrote:

> The Mediterranean consists of the Andalusian Sea, which is the mouth of the Strait of Gibraltar, advancing in the East on the left, the seas of Granada, Murcia, Catalonia, Lyon, Liguria, the Tyrrhenian sea and that of Magna Grecia, the Adriatic sea in the Gulf of Venice, the Ionian, Aegean, Anatolian, Trojan, Caramanian [South Anatolian], Syrian, Egyptian seas and those of Carthage and Fes, without still other denominations given to it by the islands that in it lie (…) The Mediterranean Sea is the most considerable of all the [gulfs] formed by the ocean; in these parts the ocean has formed other gulfs, such as the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Gulf called the Red Sea or Gulf of Mecca; the oceans of the New World also have their gulfs … [34]

As we will see, 200 years later the aspect of "other Mediterraneans" worldwide was to be highlighted again by Friedrich Ratzel but under the sign of a "universal" Mediterranean metaphor. For the moment, the practical exploration of the sea was considered more interesting. For over a hundred years the seventeenth-century pilot handbook written by the Genoese Sebastiano Gorgoglione was much appreciated, as it gave a detailed account of seasonal winds and currents, islands, rocks, shallows, and access to freshwater wells, as well as the roads and landing stages and capacity of large and small harbors of the western half of the Mediterranean.[35] The short censor's preface by Francesco Nicodemo, written in 1682 and reported in a Naples edition of the *Portulano* of 1705, was laconic. It just remarked that the guide, although authored by a

33 John D. Davies, *Pepys's Navy: Ships, Men and Warfare 1649–89* (Seaforth Publishing, 2008), 18–21.

34 Rosa, *La nautica rilucente*, 14; the "Anatolian Sea" refers probably to the Sea of Marmara; the Asiatic coast opposed to that of Constantinople was described, for example in 1534 by Francesco della Valle of Padua, as "Nattolia [Anatolia], which is the ancient Turkey"; see Toni Veneri, "Il viaggio rinascimentale da Venezia a Costantinopoli fra letteratura e cartografia" (PhD diss., Trieste University, 2010), 263.

35 The early modern handbooks and portolan charts continued a medieval tradition. Among the oldest known examples are the *Carta Pisana*—attributed to Genoese origins—and the mid-thirteenth-century *Lo Compasso de Navegar;* Evelyn Edson, *The World Map, 1300–1492: The Persistence of Tradition and Transformation* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 36–40.

person of limited writing ability, "contains things not useless to seafarers nor does it contain anything contrary to the Royal jurisdiction."[36] In line with the revolutionary climate of a century later, the lengthy preface to the 1799 edition tried to confer pathos to the publication by stating that it was to the "luminous advantage of those who undertake the navigation in the Mediterranean. Not only do our Italian nations know how to profit from it, but also the most distant ones who are eager to navigate this difficult sea with sufficient instructions."[37] That those strangers could so easily benefit from the *Portulano* was also due to the fact that in the Mediterranean the lingua franca of sailors and mariners was Italian. At least in the Turkish, Levant, and Egyptian ports "commercial people generally speak the Italian language, and a very few of them the French."[38]

Between the late sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries, the interest in naturalist exploration also grew. When in 1573 botanist Rauwolf arrived in Tripoli, he carefully examined the plants he found on the plains and in the hills that surrounded the city, among them an "abundance of pleasant olive trees that reach quite up to Mount *Libanus*."[39] He recalled the plants' biblical, Greek, Latin, or Arabic and other names, some of which he had not learned from books but by roaming Venetian and other markets. In the whole chapter he never mentions "Mediterranean plants," as most of them would probably be called today. Even works of the eighteenth century seem to confirm that there was not yet a concept of a "Mediterranean World." Roman botanist Giovanni Francesco Maratti published a study of species and varieties of lithophytes and zoophytes of "the Mediterranean shores with the adjacent islands" (*Maris Mediterranei oras cum Insulis sibi adjacentibus*), in fact referring only to parts of the Tyrrhenian coast and islands with which he was directly familiar, and which geographically coincided with the earliest use of Latin *mare nostrum*.[40] In this case, we find the general name used for the description of only a part of the Mediterranean, probably even without any generalizing intention. As in other cases, "Mediterranean" was the name of the sea before the domes-

36 Sebastiano Gorgoglione, *Portulano del Mare Mediterraneo* (Giovanni Francesco Paci, 1705).

37 Sebastiano Gorgoglione, *Portulano del Mare Mediterraneo* (Francesco Natali, 1799), anonymous preface, probably by the publisher.

38 Giovanni Mariti, *Travels through Cyprus, Syria, and Palestine: with a general history of the Levant,* vol. 1 (Robinson, 1791), 9.

39 Rauwolf, "Travels," 38.

40 Joannis Francisci Maratti, *De plantis zoophytis et lithophytis in mari Mediterraneo viventibus* (Casaletti, 1776), iv.

tic doorstep, a sea worth admiring, navigating, and exploring from all points of view—except that of a possible philosophical meaning.

Of course, as it is always and everywhere the case in human interaction, there was a kind of awareness of a "common destiny" derived from maritime and trade relations, geographical vicinity, political alliances, and frontlines of war and conflict. Nevertheless, even in the later eighteenth century almost nobody seemed to assume that such a "common destiny" would apply specifically to an area that would make sense singled out as a "Mediterranean World," instead of being a general principle of indefinite and ubiquitous validity.

1 Shifting Spheres of Influence: The Late Sixteenth and the Seventeenth Centuries

Between the Battle of Lepanto and Napoleon's invasion of Egypt, which occurred 227 years later, hardly a single day passed by in the Mediterranean without intense trading and trafficking. Nor probably did pass by a single day without animosity, violence, or armed conflict on at least some of its shores, islands, and waters. However, the battles fought in the Mediterranean basin did not always have a genuinely local background. Many of them can be seen as an extension or reverberation of clashes between great powers or religious alliances that had their epicentres far away from its shores. At times, distant conflicts mingled with local rivalries to the point that the difference was hardly recognizable.

The sixteenth century led to a redefinition of the macro spheres of influence between the two main Mediterranean powers of the time, the Kingdom of Spain and the Ottoman Empire, which expanded farther west after conquering Syria and Egypt in 1516–17. While the Ottoman westward expansion encountered limits, the Iberian expansion in North Africa was rolled back. It had begun in the late fifteenth century, when "Portuguese and Spanish ships attacked Islamic ports in North Africa, on both the Mediterranean and Atlantic coasts, and seized men for the galleys and the mines, and women for domestic service and concubinage." It also led to the conquest of port towns and coastal areas. The Moroccan victory in the 1578 Battle of Ksar el-Kebir (*al-Qaṣr al-Kabīr*) "over the Portuguese-led crusade (…) marked the beginning of the Muslim *reconquista* of the regions of North Africa previously colonized by Europeans."[41] The Ottoman naval power was also on the rise under Sultan Suleiman I "the Magnificent," so that by the middle of the century Spain had

41 Matar, *Europe Through Arab Eyes*, 4, 60.

to give up previously conquered forts and harbors on the African coast, keeping only Ceuta, Melilla, and Peñón de Vélez de la Gomera (to the day) as well as Oran and Mers El Kébir (*al-Marsá al-Kabīr*), Spanish until 1792 with interruption. Under the leadership of the later Ottoman Navy admiral Khayr al-Dīn, nicknamed "Barbarus," whose corsairs roamed Tyrrhenian, Balearic, and Ligurian waters and shores, looting goods and cattle and abducting slaves, Ottoman naval dominance seemed on the verge of being extended to the western Mediterranean.[42]

In 1516, Algiers came under the rule of Khayr al-Dīn who entered the Ottoman service three years later, but Barbarus's activities in the Western Mediterranean and the concomitant Ottoman conquest of Egypt "seemed to evolve from different historical trajectories"; at the time, the "interaction between Anatolian corsairs and Ottoman sultans remained very rare."[43] The transformation of Algiers into a subject of the Ottoman Empire was a decades-long adaptive process of negotiations that included the representation of corsairs, notables, Islamic scholars, and other groups together with the bureaucratic and military arms of Ottoman government. The resulting terms of integration were set out in charters. The same process was joined in 1551–53 by Tripoli, to which the Cyrenaica became progressively attached, and in 1569–74 by Tunis. Each of the three provinces was presided over by a Janissary garrison and an Ottoman governor (*paşa*). The intermarriage of Turkish (speaking) soldiers and administrators with locals gave rise to a new demographic, the Kouloughlis (*kuloğlular*), who were generally close to the Turkish elites, although at times the latter discriminated against them. At any rate, the margins of self-governance remained large, as merchants, privateers, fraternities, and religious schools as well as guilds, townspeople, and tribes had their role legally recognized. The influence of local scholars, merchants, or rulers often extended well beyond provincial borders to the level of empire. To this multi-layered rather than strictly verticalized interplay of power added the right to petition that every subject of the Sultan held.[44]

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42 For a Western perspective, see Robert C. Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters: White Slavery in the Mediterranean, The Barbary Coast, and Italy, 1500–1800* (Palgrave, 2003), 3–40.

43 Güneş Işıksel, "Who Killed al-Mahdī? A Note on the Early Stages of Ottoman-Sa'dian Relations," *Eurasian Studies*, 21 (2023): 261–62; also, Emiralioğlu, *Geographical Knowledge and Imperial Culture*, 19.

44 Nora Lafi, "Africa and the Nature of the Ottoman Empire: Challenging the Inertia of Eurocentrism," *Eurasian Studies* 21 (2023): 280–82; Ian Rutledge, *Sea of Troubles: The European Conquest of the Islamic Mediterranean and the Origins of the First World War c1750–1918* (Saqi Books, 2023), 81–82.

Occasional tensions between the Arab and Berber majority and Turkish-speaking representatives of the Empire would hardly turn into disloyalty against the Sultan's military and religious authority. Contemporary scholarship notes that both European sources of the period and later historiography perpetuate an image of the Maghrebi provinces—termed *eyālet* or *Ġarb ocakları* in Ottoman sources—that underestimates their integration into the Empire. This view rested on a misunderstanding of "the complexity of Ottoman institutions," which involved "the (un)formal delegation of governing powers from the central authority of the sovereign Ottoman Empire to regional or local levels," a practice that "endured within the Empire until the mid-19th century."[45]

Since the beginning of the seventeenth century, following the Ottoman-French agreements of 1604, the French, British, and Dutch concluded treaties with the provinces concerning trade, shipping, and ransom payments. The agreements formally operated within the framework of Ottoman sovereignty, but the governments of the three provinces had a relatively free hand in determining their clauses, whereas previous European attempts to exert influence on the governments of the Maghreb provinces via Constantinople had largely failed.[46] All of this did not only reinforce the Europeans' perception of a considerable degree of autonomy of the North African provinces, which undoubtedly existed, but also the instrumental usefulness of highlighting it. However, this should not lead to an underestimation of the strong ties that the North African provinces had to the Empire.

This is also because the formation of the Barbary Regencies—as the African eyalets west of Egypt were called by the Europeans—can be considered a repercussion of the Spanish *Reconquista*. Many of the Iberian Muslims and Jews who fled Spain found shelter in the Barbary countries perceived as their safe havens. The "distinctive culture" of the Maghrib was indeed "dictated by its geographic proximity to Europe and its changing demography after the arrival of hundreds of thousands of expelled European/Christianized Muslims, the Moriscos, throughout the sixteenth century, culminating in the exodus of 1609–1614."[47] Given their formal Catholic conversion, their Latin education, and their attachment to a lost homeland, the Moriscos were easily suspected by locals of being potential traitors or spies. All the more reason, then, that

45 Nicola Melis, "The Ottoman Africa and the Ottomans in Africa," *Eurasian Studies* 21 (2023): 144.

46 Guillaume Calafat, "Ottoman North Africa and ius publicum europæum," 172–74.

47 Matar, *Europe Through Arab Eyes*, 5.

they saw the Ottoman Sultan as their supreme protector. In the mightiest of the North African port cities, Algiers, the Andalusian Muslims became an important political factor favorable to the establishment and consolidation of Ottoman power, not only because they fervently fought back the recurrent Spanish attempts at conquest but also because they helped crush anti-Ottoman insurgency among local notables.[48]

Given these circumstances, it was not too far-fetched to see the 1571 Lepanto sea battle as a Spanish success in rolling back Turkish power from its immediate Iberian doorsteps.[49] What in Venice was memorized as the ultimate triumph of the Serenissima was seen from Spain as actually their own victory in the service of Christianity. "It is often said that it was a useless victory, because the Turks quickly rebuilt their army and insecurity continued to prevail in the Mediterranean, but the Turks did not forget the lesson and, as they were very committed to fighting with Persia, they preferred to reach an agreement with Philip II."[50] As a result, the Ottomans abandoned their ambitions to dominate the entire Mediterranean. They instead consolidated their dominance in the eastern and southern part of the sea and "tried to bolster their connections to Central Asia to maintain the geopolitical status quo and their claim to the leadership of the Muslim world."[51] Meanwhile, Spain, and later the *Monarquía Católica* of the Spanish-Portuguese Union formed in 1581, despite facing the presence of French, Tuscan, and North European competitors in the same waters, would again secure the Balearic, Ligurian, and Tyrrhenian waters and involve their Genoese, Balearic, and South Italian allies and vassals ever deeper in the Iberian-Italian political system and the kingdom's profitable Atlantic trade and colonial expansion.

The downside, however, was that along most parts of North Africa's coasts as well as in the central and eastern parts of the Mediterranean, the Iberian presence was sensibly declining. The formerly important Iberian—in particular, Catalan—Levantine trade would now increasingly rely on Genoese, Nea-

48 حنيفي هلايلي [Ḥanīfī Halālī], (1614–1492) في الفضاء العثماني الجزائري على ضوء الفرمانات العثمانية القضية المَوريسكية ["The Moresque Issue in the Ottoman-Algerian Space in the Light of the Ottoman Firmans (1492–1614)"], الحوار المتوسطي [*Dialogue Méditerranéen*] 6 (2014): 10, accessed April 11, 2020, https://asjp.cerist.dz/en/article/33077; I thank Nawal Petri Diab for linguistic assistance.

49 Manuel Fernández Álvarez and Ana Díaz Medina, *Historia de España*, vol. 8, *Los Asturias mayores y la culminación del Imperio* (*1516–1598*) (Madrid, 1987), 220–23.

50 Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, "Renacimiento; Ilustración," in Manuel Tuñon de Lara, Julio Valdeón Baruque and Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, *Historia de España* (Editorial Labor, 1991), 235.

51 Emiralioğlu, *Geographical Knowledge and Imperial Culture*, 52.

politan, and Sicilian intermediaries, as well as on Venice and Ragusa.[52] Henceforth, the waters of the eastern Mediterranean were dominated by the Ottomans and by those who entertained prevalently peaceful commercial and diplomatic relations with the Sublime Porte. Among the Mediterranean countries, this was the case, in particular, with the Kingdom of France and the Republics of Venice and Genoa.

At the height of the so-called "Long Turkish War," which the Habsburgs and the Pope waged on the Sultan in 1593–1606 in an attempt to drive the Turks out of the central European heartlands, French and Venetian neutrality "disillusioned all traditional Christian expectations." France kept faith with what in Spanish eyes was the "repugnant alliance with Suleiman the Magnificent" drawn up by France with *Konstantiniyye* back in 1536, "in an attempt to contain the imperial ambitions of Charles V."[53] It ostentatiously reinforced the friendly understanding in 1569, 1581, and 1604 agreeing with the Porte upon the Franco-Ottoman Capitulations, which broke the Venetian monopoly in the European Levant trade as it allowed the presence also of French consuls in the most important trade hubs of the empire under privileged conditions; it also conferred on the French, at least according to their own interpretation, the role of protecting Catholic Christians in the empire. Until Napoleon's expedition to Egypt it would stand by its partner notwithstanding occasional conflicts. Not only its commercial interest in the Levant trade but also its geopolitical ambitions and rivalries with other European powers—then mainly Spain and the Holy Roman Empire, later Great Britain—made such an alliance advisable. But the French were followed suit by others. Shortly after Pope Pius V excommunicated Queen Elizabeth and her subjects in 1570, the Ottomans were prepared to grant similar trade privileges also to the English crown; agreements with the Dutch and other European nations would follow.[54] At a time when internal trade was more important for the Ottoman Empire than trade with

52 Jordi Catalan Vidal, editor's introduction to *Crises and Transformation in the Mediterranean World*, (Palgrave, 2023), 52–53; Fernando García de Cortázar and José Manuel González Vega, *Breve historia de España* (Alianza Editorial, 2008), 241; Luis Miguel Enciso Recio et al., *Historia de España*, vol. 10 (Editorial Gredos, 1991), 278; Bariša Krekić, "Dubrovnik and Spain: Commercial and Human Contacts, Fourteenth–Sixteenth Centuries," in *Iberia and the Mediterranean World of the Middle Ages*, ed. Paul E. Chevedden et al., vol. 2 (Brill, 1996), 395–405.

53 Victor Mallia-Milanes: "L'Ordine dell'Ospedale e le spedizioni antislamiche della Spagna nel Mediterraneo. Dal primo assedio di Rodi (1480) all'assedio di Malta (1565)," in *Sardegna, Spagna e Mediterraneo: Dai Re Cattolici al Secolo d'Oro*, ed. Bruno Anatra and Giovanni Murgia (Roma, 2004), 114.

54 Fusaro, *Political Economies of Empire*, 70–73.

Europeans, the asymmetry of the capitulations did not yet harm Ottoman interests.[55]

As for Venice, decades after the forfeiture of Cyprus, the Serenissima would have to suffer other bitter territorial losses to the Sultan. However, the Venetians, despite presenting their (and not the Spanish) victorious navy at Lepanto as the real "bulwark of Christendom,"[56] saw their best interest in cooperative relationship with their mighty neighbor and "preferred commerce to war."[57] During the Thirty Years War, when Venice was joined by Savoy and France to push back Spain from the Valtellina, and also opposed Spanish influence in other Italian territories, the Serenissima's cooperation with the Ottomans became even tighter. In 1604, a Spanish squadron captured Venetian ships off the Turkish coast, seizing merchandise that belonged to Jewish subjects of the Sultan. The Venetian government sent a note of protest to the *Monarquía Católica* explaining "that they had made a treaty with the Ottoman Sultan, for which, in exchange for guaranteeing the safety of the Ottoman subjects on their ships, the Turks were to abstain from all registration in them. The Venetians reminded the Spanish monarch that this abstention would not fail to be also beneficial to his own subjects." The neutrality of Venice, indeed, "in the midst of the Spanish-Turkish struggle in the Mediterranean, did not cease to be beneficial, at times, to the riparian countries, which thus attracted more lucrative merchant ships that helped in freeing them from the attacks of the belligerents."[58]

Venice and the Porte had frequent disputes and violent scuffles along their land and sea borders. On the one hand, trade with the Ottoman Empire formed an essential pillar of Venetian commercial capitalism; on the other, geographical proximity frequently gave rise to territorial disputes and armed conflicts. This situation increasingly confronted the Serenissima with a dilemma: whether to prioritize the political promotion of maritime trade or the imperative of military security.[59] Therefore, Venice seemed not to have the same convenience as France had in establishing a quasi-alliance with the Sultan, but at times it also had a good understanding with its mighty neighbor. During the War of the Mantuan Succession (1628–31), the relationship between Venice and Istanbul was tight enough to let the government of the Serenissima

55 Rutledge, *Sea of Troubles*, 47–48, 280.

56 Filippo Maria Paladini, *Arsenale e Museo Storico Navale di Venezia. Mare, lavoro e uso pubblico della storia* (Il Poligrafo, 2008), 16.

57 Domínguez Ortiz, "Renacimiento," 235.

58 Alfonso Corral Castanedo, *Historia de España y Venecia (1604–1607)* (Estudios y Documentos, 1955), 22, 29.

59 Fusaro, *Political Economies of Empire*, 86–88.

make a diplomatic petition to their "old friend," the Sultan, for logistic support and permission to hire mercenaries in Ottoman territory to be marched on Mantua, where a clash was raging with the King of Spain.[60]

Things changed in 1645, when after a years-long period of mounting tensions, the unnerving War of Candia began, which in 1669 resulted in Venice's loss of Crete to the Ottomans. Against the backdrop of the long Franco-Spanish War (1635–59), the War of Candia influenced the Serenissima's place in the European system of alliances, bringing it closer to the Pope and the Holy Roman Empire. The Spanish enthusiasm for Venetian trade and power politics, however, remained limited. In the middle of the Cretan War, Venice was struggling to obtain Spanish promises for new war credits and have transferred the promised ones. Ambassador Giacomo Querini's emphatic insistence on how "fond of this Catholic Crown" the Serenissima was fell apparently on deaf ears. In his words, uttered in 1654, the Venetian war effort did serve the best "conveniences of Spain, which are to drive away from its kingdoms the formidable arrogance of the Turks." His "tireless" effort was to explain to Madrid all "the inconveniences and travails that the King's states would have to face in the case that Candia fell to the Turks, who are the common enemies of the Christian name."[61] While Pope Alexander VII, Pope Clement IX, the Holy Roman Empire, and even France were inclined to assist Venice, in that period the Spanish position remained lukewarm.

Northern European trade relations with the Mediterranean had a long tradition. They were carried out by English, Scottish, Dutch, Danish, and Hamburg merchants and seafarers. Ships from Flanders had rounded Cabo de São Vicente since the thirteenth century.[62] Since the second half of the fifteenth century, after the Hundred Years War ended and Castile was pacified, increasing trade "brought the North Sea into closer contact with the Mediterranean."[63] But the Anglo-Spanish War of 1585–1604 and the Dutch Revolt against Spanish rule in the Netherlands in 1568–1609 marked other qualitative and quantitative leaps in the presence of Atlantic nations in the Mediterranean. With the Republic of the Seven United Provinces, which obtained independence from Spain in 1609, an economically strong new seafaring and sea-

60 Nedim Zahirović, *The Register of Ottoman-Venetian Diplomatic Affairs at Leipzig University Library (1625– 1640)* (Schöningh, 2020), 3; the war would result in a defeat and its aftermath would trigger a catastrophic plague in Venice.

61 Archivio di Stato Venezia (ASVe), Senato, Dispacci, Dispacci ambasciatori e residenti, Spagna, filza 87, Lettera Ambasciatore Giacomo Querini, Madrid, 1° aprile 1654; and Lettera Ambasciatore Giacomo Querini, Madrid, 10 maggio 1654.

62 Reinhard Paulsen, *Schifffahrt, Hanse und Europa im Mittelmeer* (Böhlau, 2016), 201.

63 Yun-Casalilla, *Iberian World Empires*, 13.

trading nation was born. The Dutch nurtured enormous ambitions regarding their prospects of colonial and commercial expansion, of which their increasing naval presence in the Mediterranean was one expression. Given their history and the political and confessional divide, the relationship with Spain, Rome, and Vienna tended to remain unsympathetic in the early seventeenth century. It was business-like, if not friendly, with the Sublime Porte, which appreciated that the Dutch gave shelter to Spanish refugees from religious minorities.

At the same time, the Kingdom of England emerged from the sixteenth century as a major commercial and military sea power, which began laying siege to the Iberian duopoly in world trade and colonial power. The growing presence of English vessels in the Mediterranean was only one aspect, albeit an important one of the centuries-long rivalry with the Spanish Empire that developed around the globe. The British confessional unrest and civil wars of the seventeenth century, which led to the Glorious Revolution and the affirmation of Parliament in England, seemed to galvanize rather than hamper Albion's maritime expansion, not least because these very political processes were driven by the desire of an increasingly powerful merchant class to affirm their political and commercial interests. In 1654, the British Mediterranean Squadron was set up. In 1655, Cromwell declared war on Spain, but that war, which ended in 1660 with the English seizure of Jamaica, could also be looked at as an extension of the Spanish war with France, in that situation an ally of England.[64] The Spanish–French conflict had begun during the Thirty Years War and lasted until 1659.

During the Franco-Dutch War of 1672–78, which saw the Dutch fight with the support of Spain, the Holy Roman Empire, and Denmark, the French took the opportunity of an anti-Spanish uprising in Sicily to seize control of Messina, a town located in a strategic position. But Dutch vessels blocked it in 1676, forcing the French to restitute it to Spanish rule. The French had cooled down the Savoyard-Genoese War of 1672–73 to not open another front in Italy. But in 1684 they retaliated with a naval bombardment for the Genoese support for Spain. In the meantime, besides French ports, another alternative to Spanish influence and control had risen in the western Mediterranean. British and other North European trade moved to the free port of Livorno ("Leghorn"), which also became a hub of North African and Levant trade. "The Tuscan

64 Gigliola Pagano de Divitiis, "An English Merchant in the Mediterranean: Arthur Penington (1621–1677)," in *Anglo-Saxons in the Mediterranean: Commerce, Politics and Ideas (XVII–XX Centuries)*, ed. Carmel Vassallo and Michela D'Angelo (Malta University Press, 2007), 12.

port lacked the geographic advantages of Messina, but it lay outside Spain's direct sphere of influence."[65] For British, Dutch, and other Protestant traders, Livorno offered something akin to the Ottoman capitulations, at least in two respects: religious tolerance, and a legal and tributary space "where the sovereignty of the State was suspended."[66]

Already in the sixteenth century, Portugal lost all but one of its dozen possessions on the Moroccan Atlantic coast; only the control of Mazagán (*al-Jadīdah*) lasted until 1769. Ceuta on the Mediterranean Coast was ceded to Spain after the Portuguese restoration in the seventeenth century but in the end, the chess moves around the Strait would benefit England rather than Spain. In 1662, Tangier (*Ṭanjah*) was handed over to Britain as a result of dynastic intermarriage with Portugal, only to be reconquered by the Sultanate of Morocco in 1684. Twenty years later, Britain's failure to establish a garrison and trading post at the entrance of the Strait motivated its seizure of the opportunity offered by the War of Spanish Succession to occupy Gibraltar.[67]

After the completion of the *Reconquista* and the subsequent expulsion of Moriscos and other Muslims as well as Jews, Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli were vehemently hostile to any Iberian presence. The corsair practice in the regencies, like the Algerian naval *jihad*, were certainly driven by economic and military factors but also by ideological and religious motives. Corsair activity was fueled by "Andalusian Muslims who migrated to North Africa" and strongly desired to get "revenge against those who had expelled them from their homeland."[68] During the sixteenth century and a major part of the seventeenth century, Spain could nevertheless benefit from the rivalry between Morocco and the Ottoman Empire.[69] After unsuccessful Ottoman attempts at expanding their influence towards the Atlantic coast, in the late seventeenth century Morocco retaliated by fomenting discontent against the Ottoman governor in

65 Pagano de Divitiis, "An English Merchant," 13.

66 Koen Stapelbroek and Antonio Trampus, "The history of Mediterranean free ports as the invention of free trade?," in *Free Trade and Free Ports in the Mediterranean*, ed. Giulia Delogu et al. (Routledge, 2025), 4.

67 Francesca Savoldi, "'Dire straits': the free ports of Tangier and Gibraltar in the English Mediterranean," in *Free Trade and Free Ports in the Mediterranean*, ed. Giulia Delogu et al. (Routledge, 2025), 124–41.

68 هلايلي [Halālī], القضية الموريسكية ["The Moresque Issue"], 10.

69 Ābderrahmane al-Mouedden, "The Sharif and the Padishah. Some remarks on Moroccan Ottoman relations in the 16th century," *Hespéris Tamuda* 28 (1990): 7–14.

Algiers. Such attempts at subversion led to a culmination of political and military conflicts in the years between 1676 and 1691.[70] Eventually, both powers became more "inclined to make peace in order to jointly ward off the attacks of Spain."[71] In 1708, the Dey of Algiers, Muḥammad Baktāsh, conquered with Moroccan approval the Spanish-ruled cities of Oran and Mers al Kèbir (which in 1732 returned to Spain for another 60 years).

Mediterranean seafaring nations interested in taking the Atlantic routes, as well as North European seafarers interested in Mediterranean trade, had valid motives for establishing trade posts, consuls, and good relations in North Africa, in order to not depend entirely on the goodwill of the Spanish crown, which controlled the ports on the northern shore. In times when they were on bad terms with the Catholic kingdom, it was good for them to have alternative anchor places and accessible freshwater depots on the African coast. There, they had to deal with the effects of the "Mediterranean *corso*," a form of piracy that had been expanding since the late sixteenth century. It was part of a larger phenomenon, in the context of which

> privateers were regularly hired by different European states to fight their battles by proxy, but most pillaging of goods and men – whether on land, near the coast, or on the open sea – took place in the Mare Nostrum area for reasons that were (at least officially) religious. On the one side were the "Christian" privateers, including the knightly orders of Saint John and Saint Stephen; on the other were the "Muslim" corsairs, with their main bases in Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli (the so-called "regencies").[72]

The Christian seamen's, merchants', and travelers' horror of being captured, enslaved, and looted was no different for Muslim seamen, merchants, and travelers, who likewise lived in "the terror of Christian abduction. People so feared captivity that it dominated their dreams."[73]

As we will see in the next section, especially England and the Dutch Republic made efforts to gain a foothold in North Africa. The Durch Republic suc-

70 محمد علي داهش [Muḥammad 'Alī Dāḥish], الدولة العثمانية والمغرب: إشكالية الصراع والتحالف [*The Ottoman Empire and Morocco: The Problem of Conflict and Alliance*] (Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmīyah, 2010), 76–79; I thank Nawal Petri Diab for linguistic assistance.

71 داهش [Dāḥish], الدولة العثمانية والمغرب [*The Ottoman Empire and Morocco*], 78.

72 Paolo Calcagno and Luca Lo Basso, "The Barbary Obsession: The Story of the 'Turk' through the Reports of Incursions in Liguria in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in *Mediterranean Other: Images of Turks in Southern Europe and Beyond (15th – 18th Centuries)*, ed. Borja Franco Llopis and Laura Stagno (Genova University Press, 2021), 57.

73 Matar, *Europe Through Arab Eyes*, 40.

ceeded in obtaining their goal thanks to a complicated variable mixture made up of suffering corsair attacks, moving armed retaliations and engaging in diplomacy regarding commercial exchange, ransom payments for slaves and tributes or danegeld for the security of shipping lanes. The Dutch were at war with Algiers in 1618–22, 1630–62, 1664–79, 1686–1712, and 1715–26. In 1726 a peace treaty, the effects of which were briefly interrupted in 1755–57, settled the conflict on the basis of regular Dutch tribute payments.[74]

The British efforts to create diplomatic and trade networks in North Africa had not only anti-Spanish purposes. They were also part of the struggle against the Dutch competitors, who had dared challenge Britain's ambitions of becoming the worldwide leading seafaring nation. Anglo-Dutch armed conflicts broke out in 1652–54, 1665–67, and 1672–74. The sea battle between English and Algerian vessels of May 1671, when Sir Edward Spragge at the head of the English Mediterranean fleet destroyed nine "Argiers Men of War being at Bugia,"[75] must be set into the context of Dutch-British rivalry. The British victory before Bugia (*Béjaïa*/*Bijāyah*) led to a change of government in Algiers and the signing of a peace treaty that gave British merchants an advantage over their Dutch rivals.

All Christian powers, the British Kingdom and Dutch Republic included, presented their frequent clashes with the Barbary regencies as punitive actions against unlawful piracy and the abduction of Christian slaves, activities on which many Moorish seamen and merchants lived. Indeed, the "towns from Salé to Tripoli, the whole length of Barbary, all took their share in the trade."[76] However, the same powers, in particular the Dutch Republic and England, managed to entertain fairly good relations with important actors in the regencies. Their interest was not just to fight piracy but also to live with it and occasionally even draw revenue from it. Only Venice seemed more hesitant in its commercial engagement with the North African regencies and more uncompromising in its opposition to their corsairs. As a result, "from the North African point of view, not all Westerners were equal, and Venice and Venetian shipping were particular targets."[77] This stance had little to do with legal or moral principles: Venice—which, for its "dense network of commercial and diplomatic relationship with the Ottoman world," was met by the Catholic

74 Erica Heinsen-Roach, *Consuls and Captives: Dutch-North African Diplomacy in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Rochester University Press/Boydell and Brewer, 2019), 99–178.

75 Edward Spragge, *A true and perfect relation of the happy successe & victory obtained against the Turks of Argiers at Bugia, by His Majesties fleet in the Mediterranean* (Thomas Newcomb, 1671), 3.

76 Davis, *Christian Slaves*, 8.

77 Greene, *A Shared World*, 130–31.

Maltese pirates "with barely concealed hostility" and even in its domestic Adriatic waters suffered from piracy by the Catholic Uskoks—resorted to *corso* itself whenever opportunity or necessity arose.[78]

2 Trade Lanes and Power Politics: The Eighteenth Century

In the early years of the eighteenth century, the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–14) represented another watershed period. It inaugurated a new round of fundamental geopolitical changes in the Mediterranean. The main results were the weakening of the Spanish position both on sea and in its territorial possessions in Italy; the growth of Great Britain into the role of the most important and eventually dominant sea power; the strengthening of the French position in the Levantine and Italian trade, thanks also to a Bourbon dynasty installed on the Spanish throne; the rise of a new Mediterranean sea power, Austria; and the gradual decline of Venetian and Ottoman power, even if the lessening of their military strength was too measured to be immediately perceivable by the contemporaries. This perception was also shaped by the fact that the reorientation of world trade toward the Atlantic did not result in an immediate impoverishment of the Mediterranean coastal states, whose commercial activity and prosperity endured.

In 1704, during the War of Spanish Succession, the British Squadron conquered Gibraltar, ostensibly for the contingent needs of warfare on the side of the broad anti-Bourbon war alliance, a circumstance that exempted the action from disapproval by allied powers (Figure 1.2). In 1708, the Squadron took Menorca, which was a crucial waypoint on the route between the Straits and the major French and Italian seaports.[79] At the same time, it was home to an important mercantile fleet, which was now "entitled to carry British colours."[80] During the first half of the eighteenth century, the island would remain a pillar of British naval presence and maritime trade. Both acquisitions were confirmed by the Utrecht Treaty of 1713. Following the Utrecht stipulations and those by the Peace Treaty of Rastatt-Baden (1715), Austria got a hold

78 Molly Greene, *Catholic Pirates and Greek Merchants: A Maritime History of the Mediterranean* (Princeton University Press, 2010), 53.

79 Bill Nasson, *Britannia's Empire: Making a British World* (Tempus, 2004), 73; and Luis Miguel Enciso Recio et al., *Historia de España*, vol. 10, *Los Borbones en el Siglo XVIII (1700–1808)* (Editorial Gredos, 1991), 487.

80 Colin Heywood, "Ideology and the profit motive in the Algerine Corso: the strange case of the Isabella of Kirkcaldy, 1709–1714," in *Anglo-Saxons in the Mediterranean: Commerce, Politics and Ideas (XVII–XX Centuries)*, ed. Carmel Vassallo and Michela D'Angelo (Malta University Press, 2007), 17.

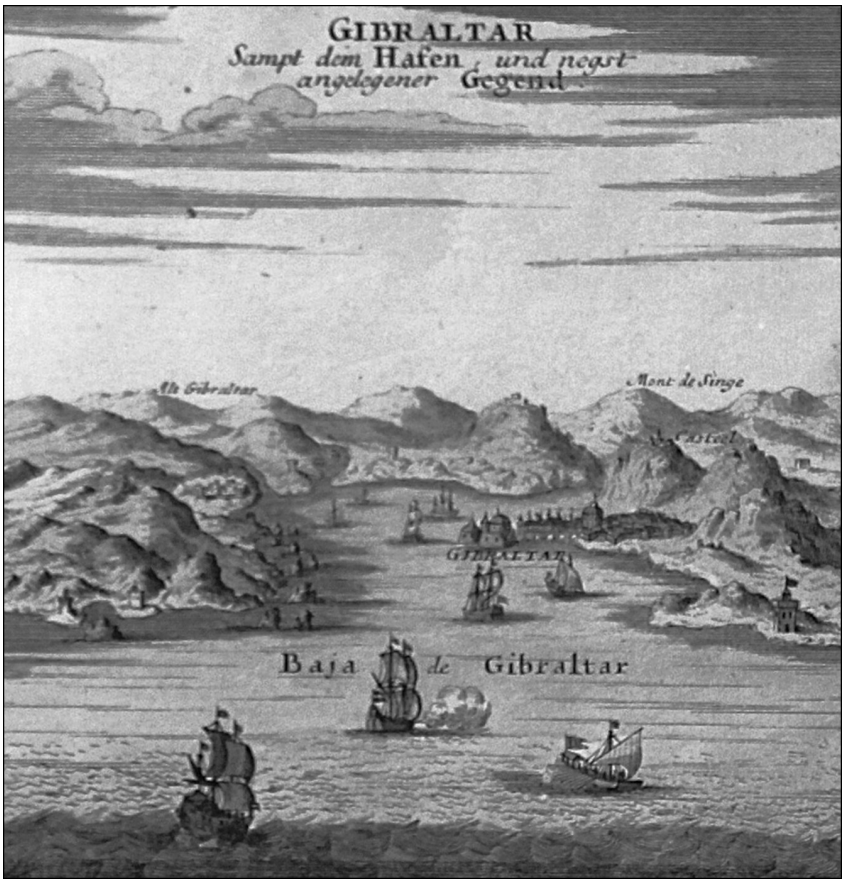


FIGURE 1.2 Gibraltar bay, port and surroundings, c. 1704. Engraving by Gabriel Bodenehr. Public domain, Wikimedia Commons

on Sardinia, Naples, Milan, and Mantua; Savoy gained Sicily and Eastern Piedmont.

In the late seventeenth century, Venice took advantage of the Turkish defeat before Vienna and the subsequent Ottoman-Habsburg War of 1684–99. It joined the Holy League and profited from the Ottomans' concentration of forces in the north, where they nevertheless lost Hungary to Austrian reconquest. Venice took the opportunity to expand its Dalmatian territories and conquer the Peloponnese (*Morea*). In 1688, Venetian cosmographer Vincenzo Coronelli gave his drawing of a recent Venetian-Ottoman naval battle before Budvar the title "Encounter between Venetians and Turks," which described the contact between battling enemy forces in a military-technical rather than

emotional way.[81] Otherwise, emotions ran high in the years of the Morean War, whipped up by a well-orchestrated use of multimedia news and war propaganda, which typically relied on religious and civilizational stereotypes about the Turkish "barbarians" and their atrocities. Venice lost the Peloponnese in the Second Morean War of 1714–18, when the Ottomans retook the peninsula.[82]

After the War of Candia, for at least seven decades Venice's "old friend" had been replaced once again by the earlier image of the treacherous and cruel "unbeliever." The conquest of Morea was portrayed as an act of defending the true faith in the name of human advancement and civility, employing both religious and secular versions of Western European historical eschatology to foster a "popular mobilization against Islam."[83] Now, after the 1718 Peace of Passarowitz (*Požarevac*), this page could be turned again. In the following decades the Ottoman Empire inspired in Europe "a balance of fear, interest, curiosity, entertainment, and even sympathy."[84] A new period of reciprocal understanding between Venice and Constantinople, both economic and cultural, allowed the re-establishment of a cooperative relationship. In the Adria and the central and eastern Mediterranean, Venetian and Ottoman seafaring had to live with an increasing number of vessels from other European nations. In addition, Venice was confronted with the strengthening of Ancona, proclaimed *porto franco* in 1732 by Pope Clement XII, and the rise of the Austrian maritime capacity centered around Trieste, which was also declared a free port.

As for the Ottomans, they had to tackle increasingly with the striving of their provinces for greater autonomy. In North Africa, in 1705—following the almost a century-long rule of beys descending from the former Corsican slave Murād Qūrṣū—a Turkish-speaking officer of the Arab cavalry, Ḥusayn ibn ʻAlī, established himself as the ruler of Tunis, thus founding a hereditary dynasty of beys that would last until 1957; in 1710, Algiers Dey ʻAlī al-Shāwush (Ali Chaouch) sent the Ottoman *paşa* back to Istanbul and appropriated to himself the role

81 Vincenzo Maria Coronelli, *Il Mediterraneo descritto dal Padre Maestro Coronelli, Cosmografo della Serenissima Repubblica di Venezia* (Accademia Cosmografica degli Argonauti, 1688), fig. "Incontro de Veneti, e Turchi Sotto Budua 12. Ag. 1686."

82 Anastasia Stouraiti, *War, Communication and the Politics of Culture in Early Modern Venice* (Cambridge University Press, 2023), 38–40; Mario Infelise and Anastasia Stouraiti, eds., *Venezia e la guerra di Morea: guerra, politica e cultura alla fine del '600* (FrancoAngeli, 2005); Filippo Maria Paladini, "Migranti, rifugiati, coloni (e abitanti nuovi) tra Dalmazia e Istria in età veneta (sec. xv–xviii)," *Ateneo veneto*, 18, no. 1 (2019): 30.

83 Stouraiti, *War, Communication and the Politics of Culture*, 90.

84 Larry Wolff, *The Singing Turk: Ottoman Power and Operatic Emotions on the European Stage from the Siege of Vienna to the Age of Napoleon* (Stanford University Press, 2016), 2.

and title of governor, as his successors would do as well; in 1711, Ahmed Karamanlı, a *kuloğlu* officer, seized power in Tripoli and was recognized in 1722 as *paşa* by the sultan, a title that was handed down to his descendants until 1835. The Ottoman military presence in the regencies was numerically weak, but its suzerainty was nowhere put into question: "In each province, relations with local dynasties were managed in a way that was both pragmatic and codified."[85] As long as the rulers stuck to the charters, recognized the sultan as the emperor and caliph, inserted their commerce into the empire's impressive network of long-distance trade routes, honored their military and tributary obligations, and continued to recruit the military caste from Anatolia, such arrangements were acceptable to Istanbul.

Nevertheless, Great Britain and other European powers tried to instigate the local elites' desire for autonomy by the prospect of lucrative trade arrangements.[86] When drawing treaties with the regencies, according to their own legal conception they treated the latter like quasi-independent states. In doing so, they perhaps partly misinterpreted the low degree of centralism and the high degree of devolution that characterized the political, religious, and administrative dynamics of Ottoman government as an absence of imperial power from the Maghrebin periphery. In fact, none of the eyalets renegaded its allegiance to Istanbul. Their political, religious, and cultural bonds not just with the imperial center but the other provinces, especially in the Levant and the Arabian peninsula, were strong. Yet it is also true that the commercial, military, and diplomatic activity of European powers reinforced the centrifugal tendencies that "were a persistent feature in the North African provinces."[87] Although the Europeans did not succeed in driving the local rulers into separatism, we may nonetheless say that their effort to weaken the sultan's reach was a harbinger of Europe's coming colonial conquest of the Islamic Mediterranean.

In the western Mediterranean, the decades following Utrecht were characterized by Spanish attempts at revising the results of the treaties and recovering the territorial losses the kingdom had suffered in the Italian-Iberian area. In 1717–18, Spain reconquered Sardinia and landed in Sicily, but had to surrender to the stern opposition of Britain, France, the Roman-German Empire and the Dutch Republic. In 1720, Savoy and Austria swapped Sicily and Sardinia. In 1734, during the War of the Polish Succession, Spain successfully conquered the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily from Austria, while the Habsburgs strength-

85 Lafi, "Africa and the Nature," 281.
86 Rutledge, *Sea of Troubles*, 85–89.
87 Melis, "The Ottoman Africa," 145.

ened their position in central Italy by indirectly extending their rule to Tuscany in 1745. The two Spanish attempts at regaining the strategic fort of Gibraltar were unsuccessful, both defeated by the formidable forces of Great Britain.

The 1727 Spanish Siege of Gibraltar was part of a greater struggle, into which the Spanish Empire had been dragged by the British for centuries on a global scale.[88] The main theater of the Anglo-Spanish Wars of 1727–29 and 1739–42 was the Caribbean. These wars were part of the British long-term project of weakening and eventually taking over the Spanish colonial trade. It meant conflict with Spain in the Americas, the Atlantic, and the Pacific, but London never lost sight of the relevance of the Mediterranean and the Levant trade for its global strategies. A member of the British Royal Military Academy warned insistently against "pacifick schemes proposed between Great Britain and Spain by a great many unthinking people, several are very forward in offering to give up Gibraltar and Minorca merely for the sake of peace."[89] Hawkish positions like this prevailed. As if all that were not enough, the Austrian control of the former Spanish Netherlands, with their formidable export manufacture and worldwide connections in trade and finance, also represented a bitter loss for the Spanish Empire. This was true all the more so as the Habsburgs tried to integrate the new Mediterranean trade capacity they were building up in Trieste, with the web of Flemish transoceanic commercial connections inherited from Spain in the Southern Low Countries.

During the Seven Years' War of 1756–63, Great Britain, together with its Portuguese and German allies (Prussia, Hannover, Hesse, and some minor states), not only assaulted the French and Spanish colonial empires, but it also exerted pressure on the Mughal Empire in India as well as on the Holy Roman and Tsarist Empires, Sweden, and other states in Europe. The war, which, among other consequences would turn out to be a de facto prelude of the American War of Independence, had its main theaters outside the Mediterranean. The 1762 Franco-Spanish conquest of Almeida in Portugal was an episode that developed far away from the seashores. The most important development in the maritime area was the interruption of British rule over Menorca in 1756–63 by French occupation. After the French took Menorca, the Spanish and French navies on one side, the British navy on the other, observed, harassed, and tried to contain each other, so as not to give up any

88 "In the year 1727, the *Spaniards* again attempted *Gibraltar*, but with no better success than before"; Anton Friedrich Büsching, *A New System of Geography*, vol. 2. (Millar, 1762), 287.

89 John Cowley, *A view of the British trade to the Mediterranean: shewing its importance to us, its precarious situation at present, and that a total loss of it must ensue, unless the views of France and Spain are vigorously opposed* (M. Cooper, 1744), A2.

strategic position in the Mediterranean, prevent surprise attacks, and, if possible, harm the maritime trade of the enemy.[90]

Spain entered in 1779 "the civil war with outside intervention known now as the American Revolution"[91] on the side of the United States. Simultaneously, it moved its second Siege of Gibraltar, which lasted until 1783, but to no avail. Successful instead was the French-Spanish reconquest of Menorca in 1782, which could be kept under Spanish rule until 1798, before it passed a third time to Britain, to be finally turned back to Spain in 1804.

In the summer of 1779, the Spanish king "ordered his subjects to use reprisals, prey on all sorts of English ships and block the port of Gibraltar by sea and land, warning that no war or mercantile vessel will be allowed to enter it." The Venetian Ambassador to Madrid, Francesco Pesaro, while asking the Serenissima's consuls in Genoa, Marseille, Lisbon, and Cadiz to transmit the news to ship owners and captains, also commented that considering "good prey" even the vessels of third parties that might be heading for Gibraltar, was in dissonance with "the object of the blockade, the Treaties, and the Law of Nations."[92] The benefits of the action for the Spanish were meager: "While Spain had made a crucial financial and naval contribution to the American independence struggle, its own war aims of recovering prime Caribbean territory like Jamaica, and vital Mediterranean strongpoints like Gibraltar (…) failed."[93]

Watched from the British panopticon of world politics, the Spanish pawn moves in the Mediterranean area could hardly dissimulate that beyond all appearance on the global chessboard the emerging party was Bourbon France rather than Bourbon Spain. Therefore, the great power conflict over the Mediterranean became increasingly an Anglo-French affair, while Spanish influence, if not yet fading, tended to be stagnant at best. This was one reason why Great Britain was interested not just in having in Livorno a friendly trade post and possessing Gibraltar and Menorca but also in getting a foothold in Corsica, which was in rebellion against its Genoese overlords, and which was eyed by the French as well. In 1736, the German adventurer Theodor von Neuhoff managed to get elected "King of Corsica." After his short-lived reign, he would

90 Daniel Baugh, *The Global Seven Years War, 1754–1763* (Routledge, 2014), xi, 185, 299, 341, 431.

91 Noam Chomsky, "'Recovering Rights': A Crooked Path," in *Globalizing Rights. The Oxford Amnesty Lectures 1999*, ed. Matthew J. Gibney (Oxford University Press, 2003), 75.

92 ASVe, Senato, Archivio proprio Ambasciata Spagna, f 87 sf 100 Lettere alli Consoli veneti, 1727–1781, Francesco Pesaro Ambasciatore, al Mons.r Le Comte Gervasone, Consul de Vénise à Gênes, e agli altri Veneti Consoli in Lisbona, Cadice, e Marsiglia, Madrid, 13 luglio 1779.

93 Nasson, *Britannia's Empire*, 73.

live and die in British exile. In 1755, the Corsican leader Pasquale Paoli proclaimed an independent republic. Some years on, Genoa sold the island to France, which annexed Corsica in 1768. Paoli went into British exile as well. He returned to the island during the French Revolution, endorsing the establishment of an "Anglo-Corsican Kingdom." When French troops entered Livorno in 1796, almost all the British merchants "headed for Corsica, the closest safe haven." Corsica, however, was reconquered by France the same year, so that "soon after, British merchants moved from Corsica to Elba, occupied by Admiral Nelson in July 1796."[94] Nelson would remain the victor over Napoleon's Egyptian and Levantine ambitions in the following years, but France kept Corsica.

Over the course of the eighteenth century, the Ottoman Empire not only lost much of its former influence in India and South Asia to European powers, and was not only pressured by the Habsburg Empire in the Balkans, it also saw a new strong adversary arising in the Tsarist Empire, which during the Russo-Turkish war of 1768–74 brought the Crimean peninsula and Yedisan on the northern shores of the Black Sea under its direct or indirect control, while a Russian fleet entered the Mediterranean through the Straits of Gibraltar, inflicted defeats on the Ottoman navy, and backed anti-Ottoman uprisings in Greece, Egypt, and the Levant.[95] As already mentioned, at the time the Ottomans were confronted with growing centrifugal tendencies among their vassals, some of whom, like the Egyptian Mamluk 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr, nicknamed "the Cloud Catcher," backed by European merchant communities in Cairo interested in re-establishing Christian trading rights in the Red Sea, engaged in open rebellion.[96] Also "because of the Ottoman-Russian wars, the Ottoman centre could not prevent Ali Bey from gaining influence." That his "struggle to 'establish a Mamluk state'" would be ended not by Ottoman troops but by "Ebuzzeheb Muhammed Bey's 'treason'", that is, by another Mamluk, was only further proof of the center's weakness at that time.[97]

94 Michela D'Angelo, "British trade and merchants in the mid-Mediterranean: an alternative market during the Napoleonic Wars," in *Anglo-Saxons in the Mediterranean: Commerce, Politics and Ideas* (*XVII–XX Centuries*), ed. Carmel Vassallo and Michela D'Angelo (Malta University Press, 2007), 101; also, Mária Tandori, "The British rule and the English constitution in Corsica, 1794–1796," *Öt Kontinens* [Five Continents] 2 (2013): 83–92, accessed April 14, 2020, http://publicatio.bibl.u-szeged.hu/14001/1/12-TandoriMaria.pdf.

95 Hans F. Zeck, "Russland und das Mittelmeer," *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* 20, no. 6 (1943): 208–11.

96 Rutledge, *Sea of Troubles*, 108–109.

97 Selda Güner, "Mısır'da Asi bir Memlük: Bulutkapan Ali Bey (El-Kebîr) (1768/69–1773)" [A Rebellious Mamluk in Egypt: The 'Cloud-Catcher' Ali Bey (al-Kabīr), 1768/69–73], *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi* [Ankara University Journal

The eighteenth century was "an era of frequent armed interventions by the European Powers against the North African regencies. With the thunder of cannon shots, these powers tried to impose the restitution of prey or of enslaved Christian subjects or retaliate in response to atrocities suffered. Squadrons from Spain, Great Britain, and even Holland and Denmark effectuated several raids."[98] Algiers had to fend off the Dutch in 1755–57. Spain tried to regain hold over various parts of the Barbary coast. While its attempt at regaining Oran and Mers al Kèbir was successful in 1732, both attempts at conquering Algiers were disastrously defeated, in 1751 and in 1775.

The guarantees issued in 1734 by the Sublime Porte that its North African provinces would not be allowed any longer to harass Venetian ships did not prevent the Serenissima's "main source of wealth, maritime trade, [from being] subject to attacks, especially by the so-called 'Barbary Pirates', formally independent of the Sultan."[99] For some observers this was the sign of the Porte's dwindling influence in the Empire's own peripheries, while for others it was just a double-cross aimed at damaging Venetian military and economic power while officially professing "friendship." After decades of frictions and conflicts, in 1784–87 the Serenissima's fleet under the command of Angelo Emo gave its last major show of force in a naval campaign against Tunis and other Tunisian forts and harbors, obliging the Bey to concede more favorable tax rates for merchandise carried on Venetian vessels. Another source of conflict with western powers were the danegeld payments required by the regencies to guarantee a secure shipping route. In the late eighteenth century, piracy, though once a major issue, had mostly subsided and appeared to be a pretext for power politics.

Quarantine rules against the spread of epidemics, although guided by preoccupations for maintaining public health, also gave some leverage to both power politics and trade interests. The system of quarantine had been introduced in Ragusa in the late fourteenth century. From there, it spread to other important maritime trading hubs in the Mediterranean, where by the eighteenth century a marked asymmetry emerged, with plague outbreaks sharply declining in Europe, while in the Ottoman Empire, especially the Levant, they

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of the Faculty of Languages, History-Geography], 53, no. 1 (2013): 155, 176; I thank Çiğdem Oğuz for linguistic assistance; Ebuzzeheb was Abū al-Dhahab in Arabic.

98 Paolo Cau, "Gli ultimi 15 anni della Marina veneziana nei documenti dell'A.S. di Cagliari," in *Le Armi di San Marco. La potenza militare veneziana dalla Serenissima al Risorgimento* (Società Italiana di Storia Militare, 2012), 156.

99 Ferdinando Sanfelice di Monteforte, "Angelo Emo, l'ultimo ammiraglio della Serenissima," in *Le Armi di San Marco. La potenza militare veneziana dalla Serenissima al Risorgimento* (Società Italiana di Storia Militare, 2012), 114.

continued without subsiding.[100] For example, in 1727 the Venetian administration had been alarmed by reports according to which "last May the infection has returned with some rigour in Cairo and Alexandria of Egypt" and had even "expanded to Smyrna and Cyprus." It was reported "that at the end of May a French ship from Alexandria had landed at Smyrna, sending three sick people to the hospital where they perished in a few hours from the Plague."[101] As the "contagious disease is increasing in the Ottoman states," it was "chiefly important to proceed with the greatest delicacy when searching ships coming from the ports of the Levant."[102] A dozen years later, the Earl of Sandwich reported that quarantine had become

> a ceremony observed in all the ports of Christendom by ships coming from the Levant, which are obliged to remain thirty, forty or sometimes sixty days without having any communication with the people of the country, for fear of importing the plague from those ports, which seldom are free from that dreadful distemper. In all these Christian ports, which are frequented by Levant ships, there are lazarettos built for the convenience of strangers, with large magazines for the goods, which are to remain in the air for a certain number of days, before they can be delivered to the merchants, to whom they are consigned.[103]

The same author, however, indirectly admitted that quarantine rules could be relaxed if a shipowner, merchant, or captain wielded sufficient political influence, or wealth for bribes. In Malta, John Montagu's quarantine, "by a particular favour granted to us by the grand-master, consisted in no more than twenty days."[104]

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100 Daniel Panzac, "Plague and Seafaring in the Ottoman Mediterranean in the Eighteenth Century," in *Trade and Cultural Exchange in the Early Modern Mediterranean: Braudel's Maritime Legacy*, ed. Maria Fusaro et al. (I.B. Tauris, 2010), 47.

101 ASVe, Senato, Archivio proprio Ambasciata Spagna, f 87 sf 100 Lettere alli Consoli veneti, 1727–1781, Circolare ai Consoli di Lisbona, Alicante, Cadice, Madrid 29 agosto 1727; on Venetian public health measures and quarantine protocols in Mediterranean port cities between 1377 and 1793, see Giulia Delogu, *Inventare la sanità pubblica in età moderna: Venezia e l'Alto Adriatico* (Ibis, 2022), 33–61.

102 ASVe, Senato, Archivio proprio Ambasciata Spagna, f 87 sf 100 Lettere alli Consoli veneti, 1727–1781, Circolare ai Veneti Consoli di Cadice, Malaga, Alicante, Lisbona, Alicante, Cadice, Madrid 11 maggio 1728.

103 John Montagu Sandwich, *A voyage performed by the late Earl of Sandwich round the Mediterranean in the years 1738 and 1739* (Cadell and Davies, 1799), 490.

104 Montagu Sandwich, *A voyage*, 518.

Later in the century, in 1785, in Sardinia arrived the alarming news that "on the African coast pestilence reigns."[105] Sardinia was an important station for the refurbishment of water and groceries for ships on their route from Sicily to Spain or vice versa. Its health authorities issued rules for the treatment of incoming Venetian ships, which prescribed "that everything is delivered from a certain distance without communicating, and that the money that will be remitted by the Venetians cannot be received without first being immersed in vinegar."[106] And still in 1789, the Spanish authorities imposed prolonged quarantine on all ships that entered the roadstead of Spanish seaports "from places east of Oran." The Venetian consular officials noted that the quarantine measures were "very damaging for both merchandise and ships" and became extremely harmful for those who after a first quarantine would "again be visited on their way by any African corsair" and therefore obliged to face another period of quarantine.[107]

As we may infer from the cited texts, there was a tendency to equate the Ottoman Empire with the breeding of the plague, especially for political gains.[108] In the Ottoman trade hubs of Constantinople, Smyrna, Beirut, and Cairo, European merchant communities also "began to impose their own quarantine,"[109] with a similar possibility of softening the rules in the case of good relationships with local actors. Thanks to the mediation of Armenian merchants—an anonymous English trader alleged—"the Dutch shorten and expedite their voyage so much that there are many instances of a Dutch and English ship arriving at Smyrna at the same time; but before the latter has served her quarantine at Smyrna, the cargo of the former has been at London and at Hull."[110]

In the late eighteenth century, the Dutch had become a frequent target of British criticism once again. The Fourth Anglo-Dutch War of 1780–84 was triggered by the accusation that the Dutch would "illegally" circumvent the

105 Cau, "Gli ultimi 15 anni," 161.

106 Cau, "Gli ultimi 15 anni," 160.

107 ASVe, Senato, Archivio proprio Ambasciata Spagna, f 87 sf 99 Lettere del Console veneto in Cadice Spiridone Capitanachi ai suoi vice consoli ed altri all'amb. Veneta in Madrid, 1785–1790, Lettera a Pisani, Madrid, da Francesco La Sala, Malaga, 27 aprile 1787.

108 Ann Thomson, "The Turks and the Plague in the 18th Century," *Cromohs. Cyber Review of Modern Historiography*, 2020, accessed May 10, 2020, https://oajournals.fupress.net/index.php/cromohs/article/view/11563/11029.

109 Birsen Bulmuş, *Plague, Quarantines and Geopolitics in the Ottoman Empire* (Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 57.

110 Experience [Anonymous], *A treatise on the cotton trade: in twelve letters. Addressed to the Levant Company, West-India planters, and merchants* (Abraham and Taylor, s.d. [1789]), 36.

British commercial blockade against the defecting North American colonies. In the Mediterranean trade, the Dutch were accused of circumventing the harsh British quarantine laws by rerouting their Levant-trading ships through Dutch harbors, before swiftly forwarding the merchandise to Britain. More generally, if seen from the City of London, quarantine measures "are proper for general safety, but to the merchant they are hard, injurious and expensive."[111] For the influential British merchant class, which was eager to deliver huge quantities of cotton to the steam-driven cotton mills in the home country, those restrictions began to be a veritable annoyance, as they "prevent vessels from navigating freely at all times from ports in the Levant to this country."[112]

Quarantine was, first and foremost, the most efficient defence possible against the diffusion of epidemics, but the same measures were also used for economic and political bargaining, and state regulation of commercial activity. They could be imposed or eased to retaliate against someone or favor someone else. They also drew additional imaginative borders, which remapped the space no less than physical and political borders. "For centuries, zones, countries and whole areas of the Middle Sea implemented quarantine against each other, and when these transversal restrictions were eased it was often a result of conquest or colonization and therefore at the expense of the collective health of local populations."[113] Indeed, quarantine was also adopted to prevent contagion with yellow fever through incoming ships from South America or West Africa.

So, the reasoning about quarantine contributed to engraving mental borders in the collective mind. In the eighteenth century, the plague was often presented as a "Levantine" or even "Muslim" disease, against which "Christendom" erected a wall. One may recall that the "Knights Hospitallers of the Order of St John of Jerusalem were the first to adopt the 40-day quarantine because it was the amount of time Christ spent in the wilderness."[114] This had been in the fourteenth century, before the Knights came to Malta. Yet Malta became

111 Experience, *A treatise on the cotton trade*, 70.

112 Old Member of the Company [Anonymous], *A short reply to Mr. Eton's observations respecting the establishment of the Levant Company. By an old member of the Company* (s.n., 1799), 21.

113 John Chricop and Francisco Javier Martinez, editors' introduction to *Mediterranean Quarantines, 1750– 1914* (University of Manchester Press, 2018), 4; see also Alexander Chase-Levenson, "Early Nineteenth-Century Mediterranean Quarantine as a European System," in *Quarantine. Local and Global Histories*, ed. Alison Bashford (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 35–53.

114 Claude Thibeault, "The Practice of International Aerospace Medicine," *Fundamentals of Aerospace Medicine*, ed. Jeffrey R. Davis et al. (Kluwer, 2008), 687.

a prominent place of quarantine since British legislation determined "that when any vessel loads for England, in any of the ports of Turkey, and departs with a foul bill of health, such vessels shall perform quarantine at Malta, Leghorn or Venice."[115] Contagious diseases and quarantine were laden with negative feelings of a menace to life, health, or wealth, which contributed to the divide between Christendom and Islam in the European imagination.

In the early modern period, this divide was a recurrent trope in "Mediterranean" self-descriptions by both Christians and Muslims. The Arab expansion, the Crusades, and the *Reconquista* had left enough historical and mythical material for such a narrative, to which the rivalry between the Ottoman Empire and the major Catholic powers added plenty of fresh elements. The symbolic role of Lepanto, definitely a major sea battle but far from being the only one, belonged with that context. "Christian" versus "Muslim" routes became a way of describing the basic spatial configuration of seafaring in the Mediterranean, which was renewed when Spain was able to re-establish its power in the Western basin. Now "Christian" ships could once again take the route off the Spanish coast, the Balearic Islands and Sardinia, from where they sailed down to Sicily.[116] This "so-called 'Christian' route to the Levant" could be taken again "by many ships, despite currents and winds in the Straits of Messina which often compelled foreign masters to hire a local pilot. The alternative, so-called 'Muslim' route, between Sicily and the North African coast, was generally considered more dangerous because of the open sea and predators in the shape of pirates and the Turkish fleet."[117]

Yet, the "Christianity-versus-Islam" description of the Mediterranean's maritime macro pattern, as powerful as it may have been, and widespread thanks to religious fervor and theological dogma, was nevertheless also connected to contingent situations and interests. It was good for claiming "Christian" solidarity for those at war with the Ottoman Empire or those intending to bomb Algiers or Tunis. Nevertheless, those who traded and lived on the sea were used to experiencing a reality that differed from such black and white representations. The "Christianity-versus-Islam" narrative probably prevailed in Madrid, Lisbon, Rome, Palermo, and perhaps Genoa. It was presumably present to a lesser extent in Marseilles and Venice, during prolonged periods of peace with the Ottomans. On a generically religious level and when it fitted

115 John Howard, *An Account of the Principal Lazarettos in Europe* (Dilly and Cadell, 1791), 26.

116 Gianfranco Tore, "Monarchia ispanica, politica commerciale e circuiti commerciali nel Mediterraneo centrale," in *Sardegna, Spagna e Mediterraneo: Dai Re Cattolici al Secolo d'Oro*, ed. Bruno Anatra and Giovanni Murgia (Carocci, 2004), 209.

117 Pagano de Divitiis, "An English Merchant," 10–11.

with their contingent interests, it was invoked even by English and Dutch sailors. Yet, many of them would prefer to take the "Muslim route" for various reasons. What did "Christian" mean, after all, in a time riddled by interconfessional wars? In a time when the Dutch Republic was seen with favor in Constantinople for protecting Muslim and Jewish fugitives from Spanish persecution?

East of Malta, in the central and eastern Mediterranean, where the multiconfessional Ottoman Empire dominated, and even in the Holy Land, where religions were supposed to clash but were actually accustomed to coexistence, such a clear-cut mental divide made little sense in practical life. "Christian" vessels sailed in great number back and forth between their home countries and the Levant, Greek, Anatolian, and Egyptian ports, where their crews met with Muslims of different sects, Jews and local Christians of other than Catholic or Protestant denomination. Many merchant ships under the Ottoman flag were owned and commanded by Greek Orthodox Christians, and Venetian ships transported cargo of Jewish and Muslim merchants. In such an environment, an oversimplified bipartition had little concrete meaning. While in the Eastern Mediterranean under Ottoman rule Catholic Christianity was indeed perceived as foreign, Orthodox Christianity was part of local tradition and heritage.[118] But even in the western Mediterranean, "in the spheres of warfare, trade, technology and human relations, Barbary still played a role of importance and was in full intercourse with the northern shores of the Mediterranean world. It cannot be maintained that the 'Islamic' and 'Christian' halves of this world had become completely separated civilizations."[119]

This does not mean, however, that the two most fervently missionary branches of Abrahamic religion had no powerful ideological tools of simplified world representation at their disposal. These tools could be reactivated relatively easily at any given moment to legitimize political acts, including those of aggression and war. Especially in the Catholic world, the expulsion of Jews and Moriscos, the Inquisition, colonial expansion, and the attempts at "re"-conquering the land of Saint Augustine could all be interpreted as part of the same "holy" effort of the *Reconquista*, purification and re-Christianization. On the southern shores, corsair warfare against "Christian" ships was declared

118 Greene, *Catholic Pirates and Greek Merchants*, 53, 74, and 110–12, and Matar, *Europe Through Arab Eyes*, 29–30.

119 Alexander H. De Groot, "Ottoman North Africa and the Dutch Republic in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries," *Revue de l'Occident musulman et de la Méditerranée* 39 (1985): 145.

to be a step in the direction of a return to the homeland and a religious and patriotic duty. For centuries, similar schemes, deeply entrenched in dogma and religion, were repeated over and over again. They could not crush the polysemic complexity of human experience that characterized maritime life but certainly codetermined the imagination of the Mediterranean space.

CHAPTER 2

Imagining the Middle Sea

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, not only was there no "Mediterranean World" yet, but there was no one and only Mediterranean Sea either. There were many. We may assume that almost every mariner, merchant, captain, admiral, corsair, geographer, consul, minister and sovereign of a seafaring or trading country was aware of the full extension of the Mediterranean Sea and its main ports, navigation routes, and coastal areas thanks to reports, maps, travelogues, and personal experience, or at least from hearsay. The early-modern period experienced a boom of cartography also with regard to the Mediterranean.[1] However, the Mediterranean area as a whole constituted a shared space more than a shared world. Contemporaries did not perceive it as a cohesive region that clearly distinguished itself from other areas.

Internally, it was divided into smaller units, like "the world of the eastern Mediterranean,"[2] by differing horizons of experience. Seasonal wind and water currents, power politics and military alliances, piracy and pestilences segmented that sea into established shipping routes, trading corridors, different navigation rules, and governmental practices, like that of quarantine. There were areas under Spanish, Ottoman, French, Genoese, Venetian, Maltese or Moroccan influence, as well as contended or no-go areas of endemic conflict. Each of these factors contributed to partializing the spaces of Mediterranean experience, producing a plurality of mental maps and geographical imaginings, many of which were characterized by distortions and blind spots according to our present perception.

Most of these diverging mental maps of the seafaring empires, kingdoms, and republics, of the diasporas and merchant clans or religious communities, embraced only parts of the Mediterranean Sea; and of these, some left it at the margins of their own familiar collective geographical space, which could embrace much greater swaths of land and sea than the Mediterranean islands and shores, and connect far more distant places.

On the other hand, none of the many dividing lines proved to be impermeable. Travelogues and other sources confirm the impression that for many people "the economy largely transcended ideological boundaries" and a great

1 Monique O'Connnell and Eric R. Dursteler, *The Mediterranean World: From the Fall of Rome to the Rise of Napoleon* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016), 239.

2 Greene, *A Shared World*, 4.

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number of individuals frequently crossed the lines, gaining direct experience of some "other" side, often adapting to it by changing religion and name or learning another profession or language.[3] There were macro areas divided by Christian or Muslim dominance, but the Mediterranean as a whole was no such area. "Attempts at establishing a clear-cut opposition between Islam and Christendom in the Mediterranean are (…) completely misleading: in military as in political terms, alliances were both cross-religion and variable."[4] Moreover, Muslim and Christian communities coexisted within the Ottoman Empire and other realms. Open religious oppression was largely a feature of some of the European coastal states, namely in Iberia. In daily life, however, the lines were less rigid. Through the channels of trade, war, captivity, and ransom, multiple conversions by a single person occurred with some frequency and were tolerated. The same tolerance was often shown to the conflicting inner and outer religious loyalties of converts. Family ties and friendships were not necessarily severed by conversion either. This pragmatism reveals that the immediate social environment and even religious institutions did not always exhibit the stark interfaith hostility portrayed in religious pamphlets and wartime rhetoric.[5]

The coastal zones and urban centers of the Ottoman Empire, Morocco, and Southern Europe constituted a profoundly multilingual environment. This multilingualism permeated not only elite discourse but also the daily rhythms of trade and labor. For pre-modern polities, linguistic homogeneity was neither an ideal nor a priority; language served only conditionally as a marker of religious affiliation. The exception was Spain, where repressive re-Christianization enforced a harsh cultural and linguistic de-Arabization. Further afield, England's anti-Celtic Anglicization presented a certain parallel, though it did not impinge upon the Mediterranean situation.[6] Overall, the evidence suggests that "the early modern Mediterranean was a dynamic and culturally complex space of linguistic mixing in which language boundaries were unfixed, overlapping, and fluid."[7] This, however, was not a sign of a

3 Bernd Roeck, "Das Mittelmeer in der Frühen Neuzeit," in *Das Mittelmeer – die Wiege der europäischen Kultur,* ed. Klaus Rosen (Bouvier, 1998), 301.

4 Calafat, "Ottoman North Africa and ius publicum europæum," 174.

5 Matar, *Europe Through Arab* Eyes, 67–68, 186–188.

6 Eric Dursteler, "Language and Identity in the Early Modern Mediterranean," in *Mediterranean Identities in the Premodern Era: Islands, Entrepôts, Empires*, ed. John Watkins and Kathryn Reyerson (Ashgate, 2014), 41–46; also, Matar, *Europe through Arab Eyes*, 75–76.

7 Eric Dursteler, "Language and Gender in the Early Modern Mediterranean," *Renaissance Quarterly* 75 (2022), 29.

Mediterranean peculiarity, as multilingualism was not uncommon elsewhere either.

A full grasp of maritime experience's social stratification would likely reveal even greater variance in mental mapping than this chapter can capture. There were, on the one hand, military, nobility, administrative, and religious elite families with wide ramifications across political and geographic borders.[8] And there were, on the other hand, at least four social groups that had habitually similar experiences, whether voluntarily or forcibly: sailors, slaves (or captives), merchants, and ransom brokers together with a great number of trade-related migrant workers in port cities.[9] Of these, the merchants and some captains left enough written traces to make them rise early to the honors of historiographic appreciation. Ransom brokers, both occasional and specialized (often merchants or former captives themselves), moved frequently between Christian and Muslim territories. Their work sometimes involved ransoming and repatriating freed captives in both directions. The necessity of drafting petitions and contracts in this process has also left behind a certain paper trail.[10] Even literate slaves and captives, some with scholarly backgrounds, contributed their own correspondence and firsthand accounts, creating another layer of historical record.[11] The experience of most captives and slaves, ordinary sailors and likely other groups, such as prostitutes in port cities, has been transmitted most of the time only indirectly and fragmentarily, if at all.

Recent studies underline how the phenomenon of temporary captivity and slavery, linked to preying in war and corsair incursions against coastlands, as well as long distance slave trade from and to places far from the sea, was widespread and reciprocal.[12] European sources insufficiently acknowledge that Muslim travelers and sailors lived in just as much fear of capture and enslavement as Christians did, and with good reason.[13] This reality of slavery was quantitatively and even demographically relevant in North Africa, the

8 Noel Malcolm, *Agents of Empire: Knights, Corsairs, Jesuits and Spies in the Sixteenth-Century Mediterranean World* (Allen Lane, 2015).

9 O'Connnell, Dursteler, *The Mediterranean World*, 241.

10 Calafat, "Jurisdictional Pluralism," 156–57; Matar, *Europe through Arab Eyes*, 178–86.

11 Matar, *Europe through Arab Eyes*, 41–45.

12 In 1628, Kenelm Digby reported how a Florentine vessel "had taken a towne of the Turkes, and carried away men and women above 100 captives"; Kenelm Digby, *Journal of a Voyage into the Mediterranean by Sir Kenelm Digby, A.D. 1628* (Camden Society, 1886), 71.

13 Matar, *Europe through Arab Eyes*, 13.

Ottoman Empire, and virtually all European countries well beyond the shores of the Mediterranean Sea.[14]

> Muslims enslaved Christians, and Christians enslaved Muslims. The black populations of Africa began to appear in large numbers in Europe during the course of the fourteenth century. The word "slave" itself and its various Western cognates (esclavo, schiavo, sklava, etc.) are derived from that ethnic group that was the most numerous of external groups in the medieval Mediterranean slave trade, the Slavs.[15]

Still in the early-modern period, a conspicuous slave trade ran from northern and eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and West Asia into the Ottoman Empire's heartlands, Egypt, and generally North Africa, and from Africa and the Ottoman Empire into Europe. Most of the slaves and captives remain unknown to us, but Salvatore Bono recalls

> among the many, the German Johann Wild, the Turks Magiungizade and Osman Agha, the Spanish Diego Galán, the English Elizabeth Marsh, the Norwegian Niels Moss, the French Antoine Quartier, who later became Mercedarian, the Moroccan Lalla Fatna, the Icelandic Ólafur Egilsson with his family, the Dutch Maria ter Meetelen, also with a husband and children, the Calabrian Uluj Ali, one of the slaves who successfully rebuilt a life on the other side: he ended up becoming supreme admiral of the Ottoman fleet.[16]

The markets and employment of forced labor, which apparently involved a cumulative number of individuals estimated somewhere in the millions, not

14 O'Connnell and Dursteler, *The Mediterranean World*, 243–50; Giulia Bonazza, "Slavery in Europe during the Atlantic Slave Trade," *Oxford Research Encyclopaedia of African History*, 2022, accessed September 19, 2022, https://oxfordre.com/africanhistory/view/10.1093/acrefore /9780190277734.001.0001/acrefore-9780190277734-e-971.

15 Paul G. Padilla, "The Transport of Muslim Slaves in Fifteenth Century Valencia," in *Iberia and the Mediterranean World of the Middle Ages*, ed. Paul E. Chevedden et al., vol. 2 (Brill, 1996), 389.

16 Salvatore Bono, *Schiavi. Una storia mediterranea* (*XVI–XIX secolo*) (il Mulino, 2016), 8; also, Giulia Bonazza, *Abolitionism and the Persistence of Slavery in Italian States, 1750–1850* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 18–23; Stefan Hanß and Juliane Schiel, eds., *Mediterranean Slavery Revisited* (Chronos Verlag, 2014); Wolfram Kaiser, ed., *Le Commerce des captifs. Les intermédiaires dans l'échange et le rachat des prisonniers en Méditerranée, XVe–XVIIIe siècle* (École française de Rome, 2008).

all followed logics linked with maritime trade and warfare. On the other hand, an important share of slavery was indeed linked to Mediterranean seafaring, such as the corsairs' raiding and looting of enemy ships and coastal areas and the related captivity and ransom industry, as well as the dire need for propulsive force for the galleys: the use "of Muslim slaves in the oar thus became a stimulus for their capture."[17] Catholic corsairs "were annually exporting hundreds of Ottoman Muslims to Malta and Livorno to be held for ransom or sold as slaves, often as oarsmen for French or papal galleys."[18]

Not only "infidel" galley slaves but also free seamen were a mass of people of multiple origins and tongues fluctuating between port cities, ready to get hired without bonds of loyalty to a specific flag. In the early seventeenth century, Henry Blount observed that the "Turks are but ill supplyed with Seamen; for beside Renegades they have but few skilful saylors"; the "termes of Navigation" in the Ottoman navy "are Italian," he added, "either to their Slaves, being most of that Nation; or that themselves Inlanders originally, have a Language defective in Maritime affaires."[19] One and a half centuries later, a report attributed the British victories over the French and Spanish Armadas not to superior naval technology, which as the report conceded lay rather with the adversary ships, but to the fact that the enemies had no "sufficient nursery for manning their navy with experienced seamen."[20] Given the relative scarcity of qualified workforce in years of expansion of naval trade and maritime warfare, experienced sailors were probably in a fairly strong position in the negotiations for a new engagement, especially with the rise, also, of privateer warfare activity, which opened to the sailor the perspective of having his share in the prize. A contrary, perhaps interested, opinion also circulated according to which the men hired by corsairs

> were used like Slaves, detained some five or six Years, and at length set at Liberty without a Farthing in their Pockets. That Sailors of all Nations should

17 Salvatore Bono, *Corsari nel Mediterraneo: cristiani e musulmani fra guerra, schiavitù e commercio* (Arnaldo Mondadori, 1993), 109.

18 Joshua M. White, *Piracy and Law in the Ottoman Mediterranean* (Stanford University Press, 2018), 14.

19 Henry Blount, *A Voyage into the Levant with particular observations concerning the moderne condition of the Turks, and other people under that Empire* (Andrew Crooke, 1636), 73.

20 *Considerations on the nurseries for British seamen; the present state of the Levant and carriage-trade in the Mediterranean; and the comparative, military, naval, and commercial powers of the Barbary states*, s.l., s.n; [1766], 1.

> quit the Merchants to go on board these Privateers was therefore to be the oddest Mystery in the World.[21]

In fact, the conditions must have varied from one situation to another. According to maritime laws and customs, once on board, a sailor owed his captain absolute obedience under the threat of harsh punishment for mutiny. On the other hand, the number of ships, ship owners, merchants and sailors, although impressive, was still limited enough for them to know many things about each other and make news and rumors regarding a fleet, a captain, a merchant, or a remarkable vessel run quickly between port cities. News regarding sea battles, shipwrecks, black death contamination, or a capture by corsairs ran quickly, so that information regarding a certain ship or fleet often preceded its going on anchor.[22] They could easily trigger legal action regarding the ownership of a captured ship or of the merchandise that it had contained, especially when one had belonged to subjects of a warring party and the other belonged to proprietors of a neutral one, which was often the case.[23] A particularly unfair captain or ship owner could also lose his reputation among seamen on the watch for a new engagement. In general, the conditions on corsair ships must have been not that unfavorable if in 1628, in the port of Cephalonia, the British privateer Digby managed to partly renew the 270-men-strong crew of his five-ship fleet without effort; "all these [were] English, besides Fleminges, French, Greekes and Italians," he wrote.[24]

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21 John Campbell, *The travels of Edward Brown, Esq; formerly a merchant in London. Containing his observations on France and Italy; his voyage to the Levant*, vol. 1 (Longman, Hitch and Hawes, 1753), 247; the text is a fictional travelogue.

22 On June 9, 1628, British corsair Kenelm Digby fought a victorious battle with "2 Venice galliegrosses, and two of their galliones" off Alexandretta; when he came to Milos on August 16, and later to Mykonos, "they had heard a punctuall relation of my fight att Scanderone with the galeazzes"; Digby, *Journal of a Voyage*, 38, 55.

23 At Cephalonia, in 1628, a Dutch owner of a ship taken as a prize by Digby, "being a factious and seditious man (…) did maliciously goe to informe, first the Generall of the Gallies, then the Proveditore, that I had treated him in a verie ignoble manner"; Digby, *Journal of a Voyage*, 31. Of course, maritime, economic, and political interests often mingled. With regard to the judiciary practices in seaports, in 1785 a note of the Venetian consul in Cadiz complained that earlier, more impartial, practices in Spanish ports were being replaced by more biased ones: "Since the court consists of only Spanish merchants who draw their own advantage from the exclusion of foreigners, and are consequently interested in upsetting their trade, there is every reason not to expect the right and due, and necessary, impartiality"; ASVe, Senato, Archivio proprio Ambasciata Spagna, f 87 sf 99 Lettere del Console veneto in Cadice Spiridone Capitanachi ai suoi vice consoli ed altri all'amb. Veneta in Madrid, 1785–1790.

24 Digby, *Journal of a Voyage*, 31.

The circulation of experienced workers also crossed religious divides. When the same Digby sailed near Lampedusa and wondered about the conditions of the island, he could rely on "the information by some of my men that had bin there with the Turkes."[25] And the corsair ships of Barbary seemed to be manned with *renegados*, especially in their higher ranks. British admiral Edward Spragge reported from the 1671 Battle of Bugia Bay against Algerian corsairs the names of five "Turk Captains Slain, Mehammet Segara, Mantuccero alias Buttercoper, Dansiker Renegado, Eraham Rais, Courkali Renegado (a Genoese) and the next Captain under him," the majority of whom seem to have been originally Catholic or Protestant Christians.[26] A similar phenomenon apparently involved the military realm, at least if the complaint by French-Austrian nobleman Jean Dumont was not exaggerated, according to which the "Number of [French] Deserters that come over to the Turks is almost incredible."[27] In short, several social groups linked to navigation and maritime trade or warfare seemed to have such an ample circulation that it could be considered osmotic in regard to the most important political and religious "membranes" that portioned the Mediterranean into different areas.

Already in the Middle Ages—as in any other time—the Mediterranean had been no "world apart" or "closed system."[28] It reached out "to a larger world – the Sahara, continental Asia, the Indian Ocean, and the areas of the North Sea and the Baltic Sea."[29] However, again, this "opening" and the frequent "cross-cultural trade" should not be misunderstood as the thorough overcoming of pre-existing divisions, as Abulafia warns us. On the contrary, the "expansion of Italian trade across the Mediterranean, in the period of the early crusades," had been driven by a religious fervour that aggravated division. Unavoidably, following conquest a mercantile culture also emerged "in which it was difficult to demonize the non-Christian," so that on the local, family, and personal level even "real friendships could be formed across the religious divide between Christian, Muslim and Jew"; nevertheless, the "exchange of ideas, in the marketplace at any rate, [remained] very limited." Egypt was an "interchange point between otherwise largely self-contained trading systems," that is, of Mediterranean maritime trade, initially mainly in Italian hands, and the "elongated trade route via Cairo, the Red Sea and Yemen to India and the Spice

25 Digby, *Journal of a Voyage*, 72.
26 Spragge, *A true and perfect relation*, 8.
27 Jean Dumont, *A New Voyage to the Levant* [1692] (Goodwin et al., 1705), 180.
28 Roeck, *Das Mittelmeer*, 301–302.
29 Christophe Picard, *Sea of the Caliphs: The Mediterranean in the Medieval Islamic World* (Harvard University Press, 2018), 3.

Islands. Increasingly fearful of the danger of Christian assaults on Mecca and Medina, the Egyptians closed the Red Sea to non-Muslim shipping."[30]

Already in that period, the connection with a larger world mainly consisted of multifaceted reactions of forces somehow involved in the Mediterranean maritime trade to extra-Mediterranean developments, such as the Mongol conquests in Asia that made the land routes through Mesopotamia and central Asia insecure. Later, the same could be said regarding the Portuguese naval expansion to India that threatened Mameluke Egypt's interests as a trade intermediary. On similar occasions, fragmentated social and personal experience traversed "official" religious and political loyalties: When in 1509 the Portuguese Francisco de Almeida destroyed Amīr Ḥusayn al-Kurdī's Mamluk fleet, sent out to India in an attempt to counter Portuguese colonial expansion, they found on Ḥusayn's ships traces of the presence of Christian sailors, such as prayer books in Latin, Italian, and Portuguese; other sources testify that Turkish and Venetian sailors had been hired on pay for the same expedition.[31]

A similar setting, or rather mixture, of connections, divides, and crossings remained fully in place in the early-modern period, even though continuities, such as the important intermediary position of Egypt, were amalgamated and sometimes overlain by further changes without completely disappearing. The frequent shifts back and forth between admiration and denigration of Greeks, Turks, Arabs, Moors, Jews, Armenians, etc., in western European travelogues, which may appear contradictory to us when they were expressed by the same authors in the same pages, are only evidence of the enduring refraction of geographic and cultural perceptions due to a self-identification along the lines drawn by confession, dynastic loyalties, language or national narratives, which interrelated with each writer's personal beliefs, prejudices, and individual experience.

1 Segmented Imaginative Geographies

Nowhere, however, in these various conceptualizations by contemporaries could we find the "Mediterranean World" that only nineteenth- and twentieth-century geographers, philosophers, and historians would create retrospec-

30 David Abulafia, *Mediterranean Encounters, Economic, Religious, Political, 1100–1550* (Ashgate Variorum, 2000), ix–x, 3–7.

31 Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Empires between Islam and Christianity, 1500–1800* (State University of New York Press, 2019), 46, 68.

tively on the grounds of an "objective analysis" of the past. These later scholars have meticulously analyzed hosts of sources that gave plenty of evidence of the reticular connectivity of maritime and trade practices, while the conceptualization of space operated by the very witnesses of that past were not equally regarded as a material fact to be taken seriously. Rather, their "backward" and "partial" conceptions were overwritten by terms belonging to a current view grounded on a philosophy of history that assumed its characteristics over the eighteenth century. Admittedly, the intellectual groundwork for this development had already begun earlier, thanks to a new scientific approach capable of applying to the past "the principles of universal history that have been missing so far," as Giambattista Vico noted.[32] Starting from there, nineteenth-century and twentieth-century scholars would end up by drawing the picture of a Mediterranean *Erdgebiet* or "world" that was "objectively" united by geology, climate, fauna, flora, trade, networks, encounters, history, and "civilizations" or even "modernity." In fact, during the earlier centuries different geographical mappings overlapped on individual and collective levels. The aim of the present chapter is to grasp these mappings without projecting a "world" on a past that still had no notion of it.

For example, the French, Iberian, and Maghrebi imaginaries of the sea and its coasts overlaid, and competed, with each other in the western Mediterranean and eastern Atlantic, while the Venetian one dominated the Adriatic against minor competitors like Ragusa, Ancona, and later Trieste. According to French-Austrian historiographer Dumont, who wrote in the late seventeenth century, Ragusa, since the fourteenth century a tributary of the Ottomans, was not even a real competitor: "The little Republic makes a great Noise with a certain imaginary Liberty, of which the Ragusans are extremely fond, tho' really they are not Masters of themselves; for they are absolutely commanded by the Venetians, and must do what ever they please."[33] Venetian sea power also coexisted with the Ottoman one in the Ionian Sea, the Archipelago and the Levant. In the south-eastern areas, Venetian geographies competed with French, British, Maltese, Jewish, Armenian, and many other views and perceptions of the Mediterranean maritime geography, not to mention the Arabic and Egyptian ones, which more marginally comprised the Mediterranean. They mainly gravitated around the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf, and the Indian Ocean. The latter perspective was also present in Ottoman mental mapping, nor was it a stranger to the perception of European seafaring nations

32 Giambattista Vico, *Principj di Scienza Nuova* [1744], vol. 1 (Giovanni Silvestri, 1816), 63.
33 Dumont, *A New Voyage*, 347.

with Asiatic colonial ambitions such as the Portuguese, Spanish, British, or Dutch.

The Iberian-Genoese Segment

The Spanish mental representation of the sea came to be strongly centered on the western parts of the Mediterranean, where Spain was the dominant force. It can be symbolically circumscribed by the travel routes of Emperor Charles V in the sixteenth century. He touched the Spanish coasts, the Balearic archipelago, Nice, Ligurian and Tyrrhenian Italy, Sardinia, and Sicily, and included visits to Tunis, Béjaïa, and Algiers shortly before most of the Spanish North African trade posts would be lost and great parts of the Barbary coast become no-go areas for Iberian vessels. This Spanish perception of "the Mediterranean" that dominated during the *Siglo de Oro* must have been entrenched endurably in the fabric of collective imagination if a map designer of the late twentieth century could write all over the western part *Mar Mediterraneo*, excluding the parts beyond the Sicilian straits, where he placed, instead, the inscription *Mar Tirreno*, right there where according to more habitual mappings the Ionian Sea would be located.[34]

On a more general note, however, we should distinguish between the factual extension of trade lines and sea power, and collective mental mapping. In the Spanish case they seemed to superimpose fairly well, insofar as the kingdom's direct engagement in the Levant trade had actually declined, at least in relative terms, if compared to the activity of the Iberian predecessor states and communities during and after the period of the crusades. Vessels and merchants perceived as "Spanish" in the Ionian and Adriatic ports, the Archipelago, or the Levant were often of Neapolitan or Sicilian origin. Genoa was also an intermediary of Spanish trade with the Levant. The direct Spanish presence in the Levant would remain comparatively weak in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Still in 1804, when after the French defeat in Egypt the Spanish government encouraged the Compañía de Filipinas to undertake more resolute attempts to "form with Egypt a bustling trade of products from the Colonies and the Peninsula," the company, despite declaring itself willing "to access the beneficial ideas of the government," finally declined to invest important financial means into an effort that it considered hopeless.[35]

34 See the map *Los viajes de Carlos V* in Manuel Fernández Álvarez and Ana Díaz Medina, *Historia de España*, vol. 8 (Editorial Gredos, 1987), 220.

35 Archivo General de Indias, Estato, 47, nr. 41*, Pedro Ceballos sobre comercio con Egipto*, Madrid, April 28, 1804, accessed August 22, 2029, http://pares.mcu.es/ParesBusquedas20/catalogo/show/65054.

After the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the Ligurian and Tyrrhenian seafarers and merchants of Italy participated in the Iberian expansion toward the Atlantic islands and the American trade, as well as in the economic and financial institutions of the Spanish Crown, its Italian dominions, and colonial possessions. In the seventeenth century there existed anti-Spanish, partly French-fomented, resentment in southern Italy, as the anti-Spanish revolts of 1647–48 and 1674 showed.[36] The Genoese took over political and even ideological tasks for the Crown by contributing actively to "the spiritual unity among Spaniards, Genoese and Neapolitans" and committing themselves to reinforce "Catholicism in the face of constant Muslim and feudal threats to the kingdom."[37] This did not hinder the Ligurian republic from keeping consuls in the main seaports of Barbary (side by side with Venetian, Tuscan, French, English, and Dutch consuls), supplanting in some way the absence of Iberian trade representatives in the ostracized enemy countries and integrating the Spanish-North European trade circuits with the North African ones.[38]

The medieval maritime expansion of Genoa had lingered to the east once the Arab ambitions of conquest in the western Mediterranean had been curbed. In the wake of the First Crusade, Genoa and Venice managed to achieve control over great parts of the maritime trade of the Byzantine Empire, Tripoli, Armenia, Antioch, and Egypt, extending their influence beyond Constantinople to the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov, and establishing new trade posts in connection with trade routes that "led to the Caspian region and from there, through the steppes, eastward to China, or southward to Tabriz, Persia and the spice bank India."[39] After the rise of the Ottoman Empire, the influence in the Levant trades and politics of both Italian republics, but in particular that of the Ligurians, declined, although that certainly does not mean that the Genoese presence in the Levant was obliterated in the early-modern period. Many goods were "brought from the Levant" to the west by Genoese

36 Aurelio Musi, "Sistema imperiale spagnolo e sottosistema Italia: una proposta interpretativa," in *Sardegna, Spagna e Mediterraneo: Dai Re Cattolici al Secolo d'Oro*, ed. Bruno Anatra and Giovanni Murgia (Carocci, 2004), 229–37.

37 Céline Dauverd, *Imperial Ambition in the Early Modern Mediterranean: Genoese Merchants and the Spanish Crown* (Cambridge University Press, 2015), 179.

38 See Anton Federico Büsching, *Nuova Geografia tradotta in lingua toscana*, vol. 29 (Antonio Zatta, 1780), 21; Guillaume Calafat, "Jurisdictional Pluralism in a Litigious Sea (1590–1630): Hard Cases, Multi-Sited Trials and Legal Enforcement between North Africa and Italy," *Past & Present* 242, Supplement no. 14 (2019): 152–157; also, Matar, *Europe through Arab Eyes*, 75 and Yun-Casalilla, *Iberian World Empires*, 15.

39 Vera Costantini, "Commercial Roots," in *Europe and the Mediterranean: Talking, Learning, Working, and Living Together*, ed. Polyxeni Adam-Veleni et al. (Mæcenata Stiftung, 2017), 23.

ships still in the eighteenth century, and of these goods "a brisk trade" was "carried on, especially, to Spain."[40] Nevertheless, the whole area east of the Ionian Sea and Malta was left out of the *Pilot Guide to the Mediterranean* written by the Genoese seaman Gorgoglione. A later edition was presented as a guide "of the Mediterranean Sea in which all the navigation, from place to place, is contained, along with a description of all these places, towers, ports, islands, heads, rocks and shoals, which are found from the city of Genoa to Cape S. Vincent towards the west, and from Genoa to Sapienza [an island off the south-western coast of the Peloponnese] towards the east."[41] Not by chance, Gorgoglione's "Genoese" Mediterranean reached out to the Atlantic, largely superimposing the Spanish one.

Or should we rather say the Iberian one? On incoming and outgoing vessels between the Mediterranean and the North Atlantic, the rounding of Cabo de São Vicente in the Algarve was sometimes perceived as the "real" entrance to the one or the other sea, no less than the passage of the Strait of Gibraltar. This poses the question of the fluctuating perceptions of the Kingdom of Portugal as a "Mediterranean country," a perception based on its growing out of Phoenician, Latin, Arab, and Iberian-Catholic history, although there is no inch of Mediterranean shore in Portugal as long as the traversal between Ceuta and Gibraltar is considered the dividing line. This notwithstanding, for centuries Portuguese policies were tightly intertwined with Iberian, European, and Mediterranean dynastic affairs as well as with the Crusades and the Catholic Church centred at Rome. They also had their fair share in the early attempts of conquest in North Africa, sometimes even on the "Mediterranean" side of the Straits as was shown by the capture of Ceuta.[42] The main Portuguese effort, however, was directed against the Moroccan Atlantic coast, from "Tangier to Santa Cruz do cabo de Gue, today Agadir, and Safi," and at conquering Atlantic islands, circumnavigating Africa and participating in the American colonization.[43] Seen from this angle, Portugal was an "Atlantic country" much more than a "Mediterranean" one. On the other hand, since the fifteenth century the low Mediterranean geopolitical profile of Portugal relied on a detailed frame-

40 Anton Friedrich Büsching, *A New System of Geography*, vol. 3 (Millar, 1762), 96.

41 Gorgoglione, *Portulano del Mare* (1799), cover.

42 See William D. Phillips Jr., "The Spanish Kingdoms and the Wider World in the Later Middle Ages," in *Iberia and the Mediterranean World of the Middle Ages*, ed. Paul E. Chevedden et al., vol. 2 (Brill, 1996), 416–17.

43 Mercedes García-Arenal, "The Moriscos in Morocco. From Granadian Emigration to the Hornacheros of Salé," in *The Expulsion of the Moriscos from Spain*, ed. Mercedes García-Arenal and Gerard Wiegers (Brill, 2014), 291.

work of treaties with Spain regarding the division of continental and maritime spaces and thus can be seen as an indicator of Iberian unity.[44]

It nevertheless remains somewhat startling to see how the British statesman John Montagu, Earl of Sandwich, when referring to his voyage "round the Mediterranean" of 1738–39, could come to anchor and spend time "in the harbour of Lisbon," which he presented as "the capital of Portugal, the ancient kingdom of Lusitania" and terminal of "an advantageous commerce with the Brasils," without mentioning once that this marvelous city rested where the waters of Tagus pour into the Atlantic Ocean. Nor did he, on his way back, find the passage of the *Columnae Herculis* and the re-entrance into the Mediterranean worth mentioning. When speaking of the British-occupied Gibraltar, he rather found the time to deride the Spaniards for being all too easily offended, as they refused to trade with the British garrison, leaving it importing all goods needed "at a considerable expense from the opposite coast of Barbary" instead of taking they themselves the possible trade revenue.[45] So, in the perception of an unsuspecting reader, Montagu's ship never had left the Mediterranean.

The Venetian Segment

Venice's mental map of the Mediterranean seemed to mirror the Genoese one. It built on the notion that "when the Byzantine Empire had disappeared and the Genoese had retired from practising active trade, the Venetians and their counterpart, the Ottomans, became the two main Mediterranean institutional entities, and (…) the two principal players on the Mediterranean trade stage."[46] But from the perspective of geographic imagination it looked perhaps more like half a stage, or little more. The more "pluralistic," if at times Spanish-dominated, western part of the Mediterranean Sea was of great economic importance for the Venetian trade. It presented its interface with the colonial Atlantic trade routes, on which a considerable part of Venice's wealth depended. Once the dominant force in Mediterranean trade with Northern Europe, Venice had lost this position to the English and the Dutch. Moreover, a growing share of Asian goods now reached the Mediterranean via the African route through the Straits, alongside colonial products and precious metals from the Americas. To prevent losing all associated trade margins, Venetian maritime trade had to maintain a significant presence in Genoa and the key

44 Tamara Herzog, *Frontiers of Possession: Spain and Portugal in Europe and the Americas* (Harvard University Press: 2015), 169–70.

45 Montagu Sandwich, *A voyage*, 518, 524.

46 Costantini, "Commercial Roots," 25.

ports of Iberia.[47] Nevertheless, the western part of the sea remained at the margins of Venice's idea and perception of "the Mediterranean."

It was as if the Spanish or Iberian sphere of influence, seen from the Doge's Palace in St Mark's Square, appeared as an important maritime region on its own, where the Venetians were certainly familiar with, but where they frequently had to tackle problems they could at best mitigate, not solve. There were, in the seventeenth century, rivalries and conflicts between the Spanish Crown and Venice regarding its Italian hinterland. There were also the disruptive consequences of the frequent British-Dutch, Spanish-French, British-French, and Spanish-British hostilities, which provoked blockades or closures of ports, preying upon ships and merchandise, sinking of ships, legal quarrels before port authorities, additional taxes, abuse of quarantine rules, and so on. Similar occurrences also brought about negative consequences that the business of a neutral power had to suffer. More than once, the central administration and the Venetian ambassadors to the court of Madrid had to address in circular dispatches the Venetian consuls in the ports of Lisbon, Cadiz, Malaga, Alicante, and Genoa with directives regarding seafaring in times of epidemy or war.[48] The content and tone of these dispatches show how those areas were perceived as part of a greater setting of diplomatic and commercial relations, wherein Venice participated as a brave regional trader but the terms of which were settled in places out of its reach.

And indeed, when we open the folios of the cartographic representations of the Mediterranean published in the middle of the War of Morea, in 1688, by the Venetian official cosmographer Coronelli, we see how little space he dedicated to the western Mediterranean, which seemed to attract his attention as a mere waterway rather than a coastland area or territory. The overwhelming majority of the maps and designs contained in the collection are dedicated to Venetian or (formerly) Venetian-influenced areas, theaters of war with the Ottomans but likewise important trading posts of the Ottoman Empire in the Adriatic Sea, the Ionian Islands, the Peloponnese, Crete, the Aegean Archipelago, Constantinople, Smyrna and Rhodes—territories Venice was interested in having a valuable mapping of, as this could turn "useful for military

47 Fusaro, *Political Economies of Empire*, 83–85.

48 ASVe, Senato, Archivio proprio Ambasciata Spagna, f 87, sf 100, Lettere alli Consoli veneti, 1727–1781: see Circolare ai Veneti Consoli di Cadice, Malaga, Alicante, Lisbona, Alicante, Cadice, Madrid 11 maggio 1728, and Francesco Pesaro Ambasciatore, Al Mons.r Le Comte Gervasone, Consul de Vénise à Gênes, e agli altri Veneti Consoli in Lisbona, Cadice, e Marsiglia; Madrid, 13 luglio 1779.

and government purposes as well as for colonial expansion."[49] Somewhat surprisingly, but perhaps understandably in view of the war raging in the Adriatic, Ionian, and Aegean Seas areas at the time, little space is given to Egypt, Cyprus, and the Levant, with the exception of Tripoli in Syria (Figure 2.1).

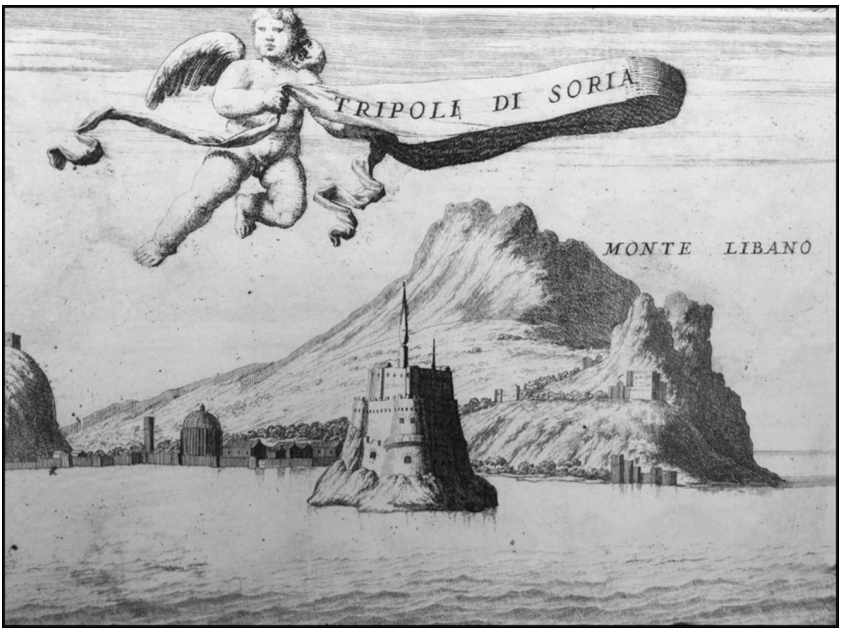


FIGURE 2.1 Tripoli in Syria designed by Venetian cosmographer Vincenzo Coronelli, c. 1688. By courtesy of Ministero della Cultura/Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, reproduction not allowed

At any rate, the northern part of the western Mediterranean is almost absent from Coronelli's collection, except Sardinia, Elba, and a few places in the Gulf of Lyon (Antibes, Grimaud). More attention is dedicated to North Africa and the "Passage West": some main ports of Barbary are described but also places slightly west of the Pillars of Hercules, such as Cadiz and Tangier on the Atlantic coast. Even two islands of the Azores in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, Mount Pico and Ilha Terceira, are included in Coronelli's "Mediterranean."[50]

49 Anastasia Stouraiti, "Propaganda figurata: Geometrie di dominio e ideologie veneziane nelle arti di Vincenzo Cronorelli," *Studi Veneziani* 44 (2002): 139; also, Stouraiti, *War, Communication and the Politics of Culture*, 108–119.

50 Coronelli, *Il Mediterraneo*, passim.

This again seems to confirm that at the time the Straits of Gibraltar and Ceuta had no absolute symbolic value as a gate between two "worlds." It rather suggests that the Iberian colonial expansion toward the Atlantic coasts and islands was seen as a prosecution of the *Reconquista*, with the Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea also perceived as a continuum.[51]

For all the rest, Coronelli's description greatly "deforms" the Mediterranean mental map by disproportionally inflating the images of the Adriatic, Ionian, and Aegean Seas, that is, Venice's *mare nostrum*. The author dedicates his "designs of the Mediterranean" to the "most eminent and most revered Prince Cardinal Rospigliosi"—likely cardinal Giacomo Rospigliosi, brother to Giovanni Battista, a military leader in the service of Emperor Leopold I, and Vincenzo, commander of the Pontifical galleys sent twice in support of Venice in the War of Candia, as well as nephew of Pope Clement IX. The author expresses hope that "the high name of the Rospigliosis" might resonate "from one to the other Sea." Already, "the triumphant thunders of applause" for their past deeds against the Turks had been "nowhere greater than in the Mediterranean, in that part of the Orient." Had not the Pontifical Navy, sent out by one Rospigliosi and commanded by another Rospigliosi, alleviated Venice's "dark spirit with auxiliary arms in the stormy tides of the Christian World"? The geographer and heraldic designer also lauded the azure background in the Venetian and Pontifical coat of arms and banners, and exalted the moment when "the picturesque metaphor" that related those signs of power to the sea was "unfolded by the glaucous sound of the waters of the Inner Sea."[52] While the latter words may leave us wondering whether he was recalling the "proud Mediterranean," the "Christian World," the Adriatic Sea, or some tides of intimate emotion, we may conclude too that the Venetian imaginary was fragmented and biased rather than holistic and complete if compared to our present common geographical standard of "the Mediterranean."

As we shall see in the next chapter, in addition to the chromatic metaphorization of sea power, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Venetian cartographic mapping anticipated another pillar of the Mediterranean metaphor: "a set of sociocultural and political practices involving both colonial surveyors and native inhabitants," soaked with the contempt of the "modern"

51 Rodrigues, "Widening the Ocean," 82.

52 Coronelli, *Il Mediterraneo*, folios 3 and 4; apparently, with "glaucous sound" the author takes a poetic liberty to conflate visual and acoustic figures, that is, the greyish-green color of the sea as described by Homer (γλαυκός) and the roar of the surf.

and "civil" dominator for the "savagery" and "idleness" of the latter.[53] Still, the sea-related metaphor of power and the power-legitimizing idea of progress had not yet been merged into a comprehensive narrative. It is only when looking back from later periods that we can fully appreciate their synergetic ideological potential.

The French-Dominated Segment

Notwithstanding so many other thinkers' contribution to a new, secularized theorizing of history, perhaps it is not too arduous to observe how during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, intellectual leadership in Europe passed gradually over to France, especially during the *Siècle des Lumières*. This was true not only in general terms but also regarding the Mediterranean, where French intellectuals would take the lead in preparing the Mediterranean metaphor. In the "real" Mediterranean, however, the cultural leadership was not yet backed by an analogous political and military strength, even though the French ambitions seemed gigantic both on the continental and global stage at least until the Seven Years War and were temporarily resurrected in the 1790s and early 1800s. Given the long-established structures of Mediterranean trade and power, once dominated by the Italian sea republics, and later characterized by a segmented multiplicity of strong actors, France, despite being one of the major trading, warring and seafaring nations, would never have the opportunity, not even under Napoleon, to establish itself as the one predominant Mediterranean Sea power. Significantly, after the French briefly took over the Septinsular Republic of the Ionian Islands following the Peace of Tilsit, they found it difficult to counter the pro-English sympathies of the local elites, especially among the ship owners and traders.[54] At the end of Napoleon's struggle with Admiral Nelson, "Britain had sealed its capture and occupation of a new ring of naval bases, from Malta and the Ionian Islands through to Corfu. This virtually turned the central Mediterranean into a floating empire of the Royal Navy."[55]

Understandably, on the level of perception and mental mapping too the "French Mediterranean" had its gravitational fields. Yet, there were seemingly fewer "blind spots" than in the cases discussed above. As an ambitious great

53 Anastasia Stouraiti, "Colonial encounters, local knowledge and the making of the cartographic archive in the Venetian Peleponnese," *European Review of History* 19, no. 4 (2012): 419.

54 Fusaro, *Political Economies of Empire*, 344–47.

55 Nasson, *Britannia's Empire*, 92.

power, France had several conflicts with rival powers operating in the area but also remarkable diplomatic capacities. French ships were present in nearly all Mediterranean emporia, especially in the Archipelago and the Levant thanks to the long-lasting Franco-Ottoman quasi-alliance drawn up in 1536 between Francis I and Suleiman the Magnificent, and its generally good understanding with both the Sublime Porte and the *Serenissima*. In 1610, George Sandys also noted that the inhabitants of Maltese cities "are altogether Frenchified; the Great Maister, and maior part of the Knights being French men."[56] While the French leading position among the Knights Hospitallers may be seen as an appreciated relic of the crusades, it helped in benefitting the French in the Franco-Ottoman Capitulations of 1604 with the role of the protector of Catholic communities in the Ottoman Empire, a role to which Venice also laid claim.[57]

Going to the Levant in 1573, Rauwolf noted the presence of western European "great many merchants, chiefly French and Italians," specifying that in Tripoli and Aleppo, the two major node points of the European-Asian trade via Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean, it was well organized thanks to the system of *Fondiques*. He also praised the coordination by "two wise, understanding and grave Presidents, of which the one that liveth here [in Tripoli] is a Frenchman, and the other at Aleppo, a Venetian, called Consuls."[58] More to the west, not unlike the British, the French sought an understanding with the North African regencies and Morocco to not rely entirely on Spanish goodwill in their passages to the Levant or the Atlantic. At the same time, however, they competed with the British for influence in the area. In 1628, the British privateer Digby wrote that he "had private intelligence that the French upon verie low conditions treated a peace with the Argire men with intention to joyne with them to overthrow the English trade in the Straightes."[59]

Although France had several diplomatic disputes and armed conflicts with other sea powers operating in the Mediterranean, it continued participating in the commercial activities along all major routes. In the early eighteenth century, the Peace of Utrecht would "liquidate the French commercial advantages, which became even greater for Great Britain." Nevertheless, after the Bourbons accessed the Spanish throne, exchanges between Spain and France

56 George Sandys, *A relation of a iourney begun An. Dom. 1610. Fovre bookes* (Barrett, 1615), 234.

57 Zahirović, *The Register*, XVII.

58 Rauwolf, "Travels," 21–22.

59 Digby, *Journal of a Voyage*, 17.

"increased over the century."[60] The observation can be extended to the Sicilian and Neapolitan kingdoms. While in the first third of the eighteenth century France had been "far surpassed by distant England as a buyer of southern [Italian] goods," after 1734 it was "widening its role to the point of placing itself firmly in first place among the recipient countries of the Mezzogiorno's exports."[61]

France became the dominant sea-trading power in the Mediterranean, although without achieving an equivalent military dominance at sea. The main French terminal of inflowing commodities from southern Italy and other Mediterranean seaports was Marseille. The port city had also been home to the seven vessels of Melchior Manlich, a wealthy Augsburg merchant operating in the Levantine trade, one of which set sail on September 2, 1573 with Manlich's brother-in-law Leonart Rauwolf on board.[62] Over the whole period we are considering here, France, mainly thanks to the Marseille merchant class, attracted and generated conspicuous traffic all over the place.

But that "place" was not yet one place, it was still many places, even for Frenchmen, although from the mid seventeenth century, imposing "a uniform structure on the Mediterranean Sea was one of the core projects of the French Ministry of Maritime Affairs."[63] Matthew D'Auria points out how in the writings of Voltaire and other French-speaking intellectuals, "references to the 'Méditerranée' were conspicuously uncommon and, when found, they usually implied a strictly physical notion." The author goes on writing that French geographers and historians

> essentially considered the Mediterranean a mosaic of various smaller seas. So, in his 1705 *Dictionnaire géographique et historique*, historian and geographer Michel-Antoine Baudrand confidently claimed that the Mediterranean was "divided into several parts that normally take their names from the countries on their coasts". This lack of uniformity also emerged in the *Encyclopédie*, where the Mediterranean was portrayed as "divided in different parts that bear different names. To the west of Italy, it is called Sea of Tuscany; in the proximity of Venice, Adriatic Sea or the Gulf of Venice; towards Greece, Ionian or Aegean

60 Enciso Recio et al., *Historia de España*, 277.

61 Biagio Salvemini and Maria Antonietta Visceglia, "Marsigla e il Mezzogiorno d'Italia (1710–1846). Flussi commerciali e complementarietà economiche," *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome. Italie et Méditerranée* 103, no. 1 (1991): 121–22.

62 Rauwolf, "Travels," 7; Hermann Kellenbenz, "Manlich, Melchior," *Neue Deutsche Biographie* 16 (1990): 37–39.

63 Christopher Drew Armstrong, "Travel and Experience in the Mediterranean of Louis XV," in *Rethinking the Mediterranean*, ed. William V. Harris (Oxford University Press, 2005), 241.

> Sea or Archipelagos; between the Hellespont and the Bosporus, it is called White Sea". The Comte de Buffon, for his part, even considered giving his readers an "enumeration of all the Mediterranean seas" to be a trying task. It is partly because of the eighteenth-century difficulty in seeing an underlying unity when looking at the Mediterranean that this was conceived of as a geographical concept in the narrowest, physical sense.[64]

Like Great Britain or the Dutch Republic, France also looked at the physical body as a waterway useful for trading with the riparian countries and a "key to the Orient." Lagging behind rival powers in trade and colonial conquest in East Asia, the French Kingdom nevertheless also developed colonial ambitions in the Far East. To promote them, it started from where all the others had started: the Christian idea of mission. In 1494 the Portuguese had obtained from Pope Alexander VI the lucrative franchise for bringing the Word of the Lord to the unbelievers and heathen of Asia. This had to do with the Portuguese seafaring capacities, which at the time were unequalled in the Catholic world when it came to maritime connections with South and East Asia, but it gave the Portuguese leverage over the missionary activity of competing powers. Still, in the second half of the seventeenth century, it happened that Spanish or Italian missionaries, like the Franciscan Juan Bautista (or Giovanni Battista) Castelnovo, had to go to China "by way of Turkey, and Persia, with other companions" because it proved impossible to take the route of Portugal.[65] After the Portuguese capabilities apparently relented, France proposed itself for stepping in to enhance the missionary work. A Société des Missions Etrangères of secular priests and laypersons was created in Paris in 1659 with royal backing, to set a French foot more firmly on East Asian ground and continue the missionary work that the Jesuit Alexandre de Rhodes had already begun in Tonkin.

To avoid upsetting the Lusitanian clergy, Pope Alexander VII created a French Bishop of Heliopolis (*Ba'labakk*) in Phoenicia who functioned as apostolic vicar of Tonkin, while "Pierre Lambert de la Motte was made titular bishop of Beryte (Beirut) with a see stretching from Cambodia to Jiangxi."[66]

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64 D'Auria, "Protean boundaries," 32–33.

65 For his second journey to China, Castelnovo tried to pass through the Spanish West Indies; Archivo General de Indias, Audiencia de Filipinas, código de referencia: ES.41091.AGI/23.6.417//Filipinas 83, n. 40, Petición del franciscano Juan Bautista de Castelnovo de licencia para volver a China, 1691, accessed March 15, 2021, http://pares.mcu.es/ParesBusquedas20/catalogo/description/1930586.

66 Michael Smithies, "Jacques de Bourges (c. 1630–1714) and Siam," *The Journal of the Siam Society* 81, no. 2 (1993): 113; also, Dirk Van der Cruysse, *Siam & the West, 1500–1700* (Silkworm Books, 2002), 131–36.

Jacques de Bourges, a priest of Missions Etrangères who in 1660 accompanied de la Motte on his journey to Siam, complained that both the British and Dutch East India Companies had refused to take passengers on board, while for diplomatic reasons they were instructed to avoid traveling on Portuguese ships. Consequently, "there was nothing left to do but take the way across the Mediterranean. This way, however, seemed the most arduous, the longest and the most uncertain because of all sorts of dangers and because of the high costs."[67] The same Pater Bourges confirmed the national rather than (only) ecclesiastical character of the mission when highlighting its role in establishing a new French connection with the Far East: "It was believed that the journey to China was impossible for the French, but my lord the Bishop of Beirut paved the way for it, taking a path previously unknown in France."[68] On his road, the "Bishop of Beirut" accurately avoided touching Beirut but opted for a route via Malta, Cyprus, Alexandretta, Aleppo and Baghdad, from where he crossed into Persia and India before sailing to Siam.

In this case, French missionaries, to advance their own religious and the kingdom's geopolitical purposes, used the Mediterranean waterway as a launchpad, albeit hostile and full of perils, for the penetration of the Far East. Under the angle of intellectual interest, during the following period French scholars began examining more closely various countries bathed by Mediterranean waters to rediscover the signs of a distant past that could be made to fit with their visions of history and their future expectations. The Jesuit abbot Joseph de La Porte, editor of the *Observateur littéraire*, wrote in a travelogue that "Egypt, among all countries, was first civilized, that it had the first regular constitution, and that it first instituted a monarchical government."[69] The country on the Nile was destined to acquire a prominent status in French Mediterranean history narrations, while other texts appreciated for the same purpose Mycenaean-Greek mythology and Roman antiquity.

In *Voyage à Paphos* of 1727, an anonymous author offered a secularized vision of human transcendent purpose, when in sight of the Temple of Aphrodite he underlined that the "gods descended eagerly to the earth to taste the pleasures of mortals, which made them more alive than the pleasures of the

67 Jacques de Bourges, *Wahrhaffte und eigendliche Erzehlung von der Reise des Bischofs von Beryte aus Frankreich zu Wasser und Lande nach China* (Ritzschischer Buchladen, 1671), 3.

68 de Bourges, *Wahrhaffte und eigendliche Erzehlung*, 2.

69 Joseph de La Porte, *Reisen eines Franzosen, oder Beschreibung der vornehmsten Reiche in der Welt nach ihrer ehemaligen und itzigen Beschaffenheit* (Breitkopf, 1768), 136; original edition: Joseph de La Porte, *Le Voyageur francois, ou la Connaissance de l'Ancien et le Nouveau Monde* (Moutard, 1765).

Olympus," an observation that let him conclude that "mortals are equal to gods in the Temple of Love." France, however, still had a way to go to live up to the god-like ideals of liberty, as long as the "nation provides more treacherous people than lovers."[70] On the other hand, Montesquieu, to whom *Voyage à Paphos* has been ascribed, also saw on the Mediterranean shores negative models that modern Europe should better refute. As D'Auria explains, he created an opposition between tyrant "ancient bellicose civilizations, epitomized by the greatest of them all, the Roman Empire, and modern European commercial societies," which Montesquieu thought were more inclined to peace and cooperation.[71]

The memory of the Roman Empire was to become one of the central images of the Mediterranean space. In the European imaginary, at least in the eighteenth century, it had become no less important than recalling the holy places of biblical narration. A *tabula geografica provinciarum et urbium colonia*, created in the early eighteenth century by the French royal geographer Guillaume de l'Isle and the Benedictine scholar of Ragusa, Anselmo Banduri, presented the eastern Mediterranean "as a Roman Province." Most likely it was acquired by the Habsburg administration not just for a flattering recollection of the model empire—"imperialists" was a widely used appellation for the Holy Roman Empire's subjects—but due to their own focus on the eastern Mediterranean.[72]

The Habsburg and Tsarist Neophytes

In the eighteenth century, the Habsburg Monarchy presented itself as a neophyte on the Mediterranean stage. After the conclusion of the Spanish Wars of Succession and the 1719 Treaty of Passarowitz, which ended the military confrontation between Venice and Austria on the one side and the Ottomans on the other, Emperor Charles VI decided to engage actively in Mediterranean maritime trade. Under his own reign and even more so under that of his daughter Maria Theresa, Venice's centuries-old absolute dominance in the upper Adriatic Sea was seriously challenged. The Habsburgs invested in the expansion of the port cities of Trieste and Fiume and their economic and demographic development, both conceding to free port status in 1719. The

70 "Voyage à Paphos," *Mercure de France* 2 (1727), 2864, 2868, 2884; see also Rolf Petri, "L'allegoria dell'Occidente," *La Rivista di Engramma* 150 (2017): 254.

71 D'Auria, *Protean boundaries*, 42.

72 The map can be seen in Österreichisches Staatsarchiv OeStA/HHStA, KS, Ke3-2/1 *Östliches Mittelmeer als römische Provinz*; the appellative "imperialists" is used, for example, by Dumont, *A New Voyage*, 175 and Mariti, *Travels*, vol. 1, 77.

monarchy moved the headquarters of the Eastern Company from the former Spanish, now Austrian, Netherlands to Trieste to attract part of the oriental trade to the Mediterranean. Over time, the military capacity, which initially relied on foreign assistance by Genoa, the Hanseatic League, and others, also grew and with it the maritime weight of the "imperialists," as the 1748–49 treaties with Tripoli, Tunis, and Algiers show. In particular, Austria was interested in securing its commercial ties with the Ottoman Empire and becoming itself a transit haven for the Levant trade directed to central Europe. With economic incentives and the guarantee of confessional freedom, Trieste attracted merchant communities from Protestant Germany as well as Jews, Turks, and Greeks.[73] Although Trieste became a terminal of traffic from all possible directions, the Habsburg Monarchy's Mediterranean principal focus appeared to coincide with the above-mentioned *tabula geografica* of the eastern Mediterranean. At the same time, it has to be brought to mind how the maritime geopolitical games were only one aspect—and not the most important one—of the Habsburg Monarchy's overall strategies.

The global objectives of the Tsarist Empire were certainly no less ambitious. Seen from Saint Petersburg, the Mediterranean was no less a waterway and segment of their global trade networks. Yet this segment was only theoretical unless Russia gained access to it through the Bosphorus. The Russian fleet that sailed from the Baltic Sea to the Mediterranean in 1770 under the command of Count Aleksey Grigoryevich Orlov during the 1768–74 Ottoman-Russian Wars served to distract the Ottoman navy from the northern war theater around Crimea and the Danube delta.[74] The appearance of the Tsarist fleet immediately interfered with Mediterranean equilibria, as it "created a dangerous situation for Ottoman ships," and yielded, as a side effect, the further reduction of corsair activity.[75] Orlov inflicted a disastrous defeat on the Turkish Navy at the Battle of Çeşme, but the opening of a Russian passage through the Dardanelles lacked success, and so did the concomitant Greek insurrection instigated by Russia in the Peloponnese, as well as the siege and temporary occupation of Beirut. The Russian fleet sailed back in 1774. Nevertheless, after the hapless Sultan Mustafa III lost his navy and his campaigns in the ongoing land war

73 Maximiliane Rieder, "Cosmopoliti sull'Adriatico. Mercanti ed industriali tedeschi a Venezia e Trieste," *Qualestoria* 38, no. 1 (2010): 102–104.

74 Rutledge, *Sea of Troubles*, 91–103; Gallant, *The Edinburgh History of the Greeks*, 1–23.

75 Daniel Panzac, "Une activité en trompe-l'œil: la guerre de course à Tripoli de Barbarie dans la seconde moitié du XVIII siècle," *Revue de l'Occident musulman et de la Méditerranée*, 47 (1988): 128; on pervasive Catholic and Protestant piracy against Ottoman trade and subjects, especially in the seventeenth century, see White, *Piracy and Law in the Ottoman Mediterranean*, 1–19.

failed, his successor Abdulhamid I had to concede the independence of Crimea and agree to vast Russian land acquisitions on the northern Black Sea shores. He also had to grant free Russian navigation in the Black Sea and the right to cross through the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles with merchant vessels into the Mediterranean.

Another concession was Russia's right to build an Orthodox church in Constantinople, which in the Russian interpretation was tantamount to the role of protector of the Orthodox Christian population under Ottoman rule. The political and geographic range of Orlov's actions also suggests how, in the late eighteenth century, the "resurrection" of Orthodox Christianity in the Balkans, the Peloponnese, the Archipelago, Asia Minor, and the Levant—and with it, a neo-Byzantinist geography of the Eastern Mediterranean—emerged in the mind of the Tsarist Empire. The prospective reduction or dismantling of the Ottoman Empire was an implicit part of this imagining, an unspoken phantasy increasingly shared by other European powers. While France officially supported the Ottomans against Russia, French diplomats and merchant representatives began making secret plans regarding the "independence" of parts of the Empire, Egypt in particular, should their old friend deplorably lose the war.[76]

2 Overlapping Imaginative Geographies

The British, Dutch, Hanseatic, and Danish maritime relations with the Mediterranean were long-standing and originally driven by a twofold commercial objective. One was the exchange with the countries of the area, some of which were still among the wealthiest in the world, having important urban networks with a passable capacity for consumption and a rich panel of agricultural or mineral commodities and specialized manufacture in their offer.[77] The other was the participation in the trade of South Asian and East Asian goods that continued flowing in via Suez and Aleppo notwithstanding the ship routes around Cape Horn were improving their transport capacities.

The fact that European world trade increasingly shifted toward Atlantic routes beginning in the sixteenth century did not mean that the old flow of goods between Europe and Asia via the Mediterranean came to a halt. Suez remained a focal point of western European fantasies throughout the eighteenth century, like those formulated in 1753 by the Scottish author John

76 Rutledge, *Sea of Troubles*, 94, 104–105.

77 Yun-Casalilla, *Iberian World Empires*, 82, 316–21, 419–20.

Campbell. Concerned with opening new prospects for "the Enlargement of our English Commerce," he drew the attention of the "Christian Traders" to the fact that

> nothing can be plainer than that the settling of a Factory here would be of prodigious Consequence, and might in some measure alter once again the Trade with the Indies. Land Carriage by Camels is very easy and cheap, and the Distance between Suez and Damietta not above 130 Miles; so that for ought I perceive, Indian commodities might be carried from thence to Marseilles in three Weeks, or a Month at farthest. I know very well that there is much Difficulty in treating with the Turks about altering old Customs, but I know full as well that there is no Custom they will not alter, for the Sake of getting by it.[78]

With the beginning Northwestern European industrialization, the Ottoman Empire and other Mediterranean countries would turn into important export markets and providers of wheat, cotton, raw silk, and other goods, while in absolute terms the Mediterranean's importance as a trade connection with South and East Asia would even increase. However, the Mediterranean gave access to lucrative regional markets and important trade hubs also before industrialization.

Competing North-West European Geographies of the Mediterranean

In the late sixteenth century, Ferdinando I de' Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany, declared Livorno a *porto franco*. Duty-free trade and legal as well as administrative provisions favorable to commerce attracted merchants and seafarers from the major trading countries as far as Persia, and Jews or Protestants expelled from Catholic countries. The multi-confessional open atmosphere of the port city was attractive for ship owners and merchants from Protestant North European countries as well, so that "from 1600 onwards there had always been a direct connection between Hamburg and Amsterdam and Livorno"; hence, the Tuscan seaport held a noteworthy share in the increasing presence of northern Europeans in the Mediterranean, who "after 1590 were primarily Hanseatic, Dutch and English."[79] Long-lasting rivalries notwith-

78 Campbell, *The travels of Edward Brown*, vol. 2, 66.

79 Magnus Ressel, "Venice and the redemption of Northern European slaves (seventeenth and eighteenth centuries)," *Cahiers de la Méditerranée* [online] 87 (2013): 2, 10, accessed August 19, 2019, http://journals.openedition.org/cdlm/7194.

standing, "the Netherlands and Germany (through Hamburg) also held an important position in the Spanish foreign commerce," and so did Britain.[80]

In comparison, the "Danish monarchy was a latecomer to southern European water," as their activity intensified only in the eighteenth century, relying more on a Venetian than a Tuscan partnership.[81] Danish merchants and ships were active in the Levant trade including Cyprus, as well as in Venice and the western Mediterranean, where their vessels served the route from Cadiz to Marseille and Livorno.[82] Magnus Ressel has argued that Denmark, if compared to British and Dutch traders or the Hanseatic League, was "a country without knowledge of Mediterranean affairs."[83] This may have been a major reason for King Frederick V to finance a scientific expedition into "the Orient" that traveled from Marseille to Egypt via Malta and Rhodes, from there to the Red Sea, Arabia, Mesopotamia, and Persia, before turning back home through Aleppo, Cyprus, the Levant, Constantinople, the Balkans, and Poland. It lasted from 1761 to 1767. The academic crew's geographer, Carsten Niebuhr, "narrated the expedition in his monumental travelogue, which (…) caused a remarkable sensation and is reckoned among the classical works of the eighteenth century."[84] Niebuhr's masterpiece, which is among the sources of the present study, distinguishes itself from most of the other travelogues due to the visible effort to describe what the author saw and report what he heard without much comment or explicit value judgment.[85] His sober approach denotes a low degree of metaphorization if compared to other geographic descriptions of the time, let alone the ideologically driven nineteenth-century geography. At any rate, the underlying space metaphor, provided there was one, was not related to the Mediterranean. Both the itinerary of the expedition and the title of the book confirm that the scholars in service of the Danish Crown were not hoping to discover a "Mediterranean World" but intended to look more closely

80 Enciso Recio et al., *Historia de España*, 278.

81 Ressel, *Venice and the redemption*, 15.

82 Mariti, *Travels*, vol. 1, 77; and ASVe, Senato, Archivio proprio Ambasciata Spagna, f 87 sf 100 Lettere alli Consoli veneti, 1727–1781, *Al Martini 26 ottobre 1766*; and f 87 sf 99 Lettere del Console veneto in Cadice Spiridone Capitanachi ai suoi vice consoli ed altri all'amb. Veneta in Madrid, 1785–1790, *Lettera di Capitanachi all'ambasciatore*, Cadice, 2 maggio 1786.

83 Ressel, *Venice and the redemption*, 7.

84 Lucia Mor, "Bilder des islamischen Ägypten in der deutschen Aufklärung: von der Reisebeschreibung zum Roman," in *Deutsche Kultur und Islam am Mittelmeer*, ed. Laura Auteri and Margherita Cottone (Kümmerle Verlag, 2005), 219.

85 Carsten Niebuhr, *Entdeckungen im Orient. Reise nach Arabien und anderen Ländern 1761–1767* [1774] (Erdmann, 1973).

into "the Orient," as for the kingdom the Levant trade was the main point of interest.

In British Mediterranean seafaring, the latent and open warfare with Spain and the Dutch Republic in the seventeenth century favored the massive presence of "irregular traders," pirates, and privateers (like Kenelm Digby), whose ships at times outnumbered those of the Levant Company, otherwise privileged with British trade prerogatives in the Ottoman Empire.[86] At least in theory, thanks to a monopoly granted by royal charters, the Company "controlled sales on the home market as well as the quality, quantity and price of the goods imported, exported or re-exported."[87] But pirates and privateers "were not inclined to lose the chance of rich pickings by overscrupulous discrimination between enemy and neutral ships or goods, particularly since they were always welcome to sell their booty in the Barbary ports."[88] They created hostility and diplomatic tensions with the other trading partners, in particular Venice. Officially, similar frictions were unintentional, however the privateers' aggressive actions often prepared the waters for more intense British penetration.

What mostly enflamed British fantasies and euphoria was the conquest of Gibraltar. In his *Letter to the Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations concerning the Advantage of Gibraltar to the Trade of Great Britain*, "Turkey Merchant" John Beaver stressed that

> The Possession of Gibraltar gives us an Influence over all the States, whose Trade obliges their Ships to pass that Way: Nay, we might by a vigilant Management and strict Look outs, so entirely command this Passage of the Streights Mouth, that we might possibly require a Tribute from Ships sailing through it, in much the same manner as the King of Denmark exacts one of all Vessels that pass the Sound (…) Another very considerable Advantage that arises to us from the Possession of Gibraltar is with Respect to the Moors, who are the subjects of the Emperor of Morocco. These are such a faithless and unsteady People, that 'tis well known the most solemn Ties and Treaties are not sufficient to bind them (…) unless we have a Power near at hand to keep them in Awe, both to

86 Despina Vlami, *Trading with the Ottomans. The Levant Company in the Middle East* (I.B. Tauris 2015), 13–17.

87 Pagano de Divitiis, "An English Merchant," 7.

88 Kenneth R. Andrews, *Ships, Money and Politics: Seafaring and Naval Enterprise in the Reign of Charles I* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), 114.

> distress their Trade, as well as preserve our own. And where can we have a Power more aptly placed for these Purposes, than at Gibraltar?[89]

The advantage granted by geography to the King of Denmark was a notorious thorn in the British flesh, and a motive for both enthusiasm and fears regarding Gibraltar. What the British "dreaded" or at least was depicted as dreadful in British politics was the Spanish pursuit of vindication.

After Utrecht, the Iberian kingdom was looking for new alliances "against the commercial and colonial imperialism of England," fully aware as it was that the "English danger was going to be a constant factor. A triple horizon of conflict divided the British and Spaniards: the claim of Gibraltar and Menorca, the restoration of Spanish power in Italy and the threat of the Spanish Indies."[90] It was again a merchant, Reeve Williams, who wrote to a member of Parliament to warn against the peril in which Great Britain allegedly was "of losing her trade, by the great increase of the naval power of Spain." It was perhaps a reminiscence of the unsuccessful siege of Cadiz in 1702 that made him claim not to "forget" that town "which, though lying on the Atlantick Ocean, is situated so near to the Mouth of the Streights, that it seems as a Key to lock it up." That key should better not be left in Spanish hands, he seemed to imply.

> And should the Naval Power of Spain increase in the manner it has lately done, it is very natural to expect that Kingdom will either assume to herself the Trade of the Mediterranean Sea, exclusive of all other Nations, or impose upon them what Toll she pleases for passing the Streights of Gibraltar, in Imitation of the King of Denmark at Elsinore, and be in a much better Capacity to assert her Pretensions.[91]

The form of Williams's argument is remarkable in more than one respect. He did not explain why Spain, after more than two centuries of control over Gibraltar and half a century of control over Ceuta, would now be able to successfully establish what it had never succeeded in establishing before: the full control of the passage. Nor did he explain why the Iberian kingdom should make this attempt from Cadiz, from where they would need to permanently

89 John Beaver, *A Letter to the Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations concerning the Advantage of Gibraltar to the Trade of Great Britain with some Proposals to render that Place more useful* (Roberts, 1720), 7.

90 Enciso Recio et al., *Historia de España*, vol. 10, 493.

91 Reeve Williams, *A letter from a merchant to a Member of Parliament relating to the danger Great Britain is in of losing her trade, by the great increase of the naval power of Spain. With a chart of the Mediterranean Sea annex'd* (n.n., 1718), 4–5.

control a 55-mile stretch down to the hostile Moroccan shore instead of the 11 miles to be covered in the Straits. Among the booties that Britain had collected at Utrecht there was the Spanish royal monopoly over the African slave trade with Spanish America. The British appetite for diverting the returns of Spanish colonial trade to the City of London could plainly be seen. Given that Cadiz was the Spanish gate to its colonial richesses, did not the phrase "nor must Cadiz be forgotten" sound sinister? Williams also suggested that Spain would block the Mediterranean trade "of all other Nations," implying that any step undertaken by Britain to prevent that nefarious outcome would be in the interest "of all other Nations." This was nothing short of a claim for leadership as the guardian of international and maritime law, a standard pattern of imperialist argument we still are all too familiar with today.

Williams's letter went ahead with demonstrating that the Spanish annihilation of British trade lurked all the way from Gibraltar to Italy, Turkey, and the Levant, should Sicily and Sardinia "continue in the Possession of the Spaniards." So, to not endanger the entire British Mediterranean trade, he wondered whether the time was not ripe to act "without entring [sic] into the School-Boy Dispute of Who struck first?"[92] The British government was looking for domestic support "for the dispatch of a fleet to the Mediterranean in response to the Spanish invasion of Sardinia in 1717 and in Sicily in 1718."[93]

What more convincing advocacy for the use of the Navy could there exist than the plea of a merchant? Naval power in the service of capitalist interest seemed at the core of British Mediterranean politics, which in contrast to other likewise eagerly trading nations seemed plain in admitting its intentions without much need for moral pretence. Given that there was a beleaguered waterway that connected the Thames with important regional markets and long-distance trade routes, to keep that waterway open, ergo the business going and trade revenues growing, Her or His Majesty and Parliament were required to invest more in naval vessels and cannons. A clear-cut calculation of risks, costs, benefits, this was all—or at least, so it seems at first glance. But was it really all? In fact, it appears that not even British utilitarianism could do without mythology. In the wake of the battle for Gibraltar, Joseph Browne versified his country's triumph, recalling not only Lepanto but comparing the conquest of Gibraltar to nothing less than Octavian's victory at the Battle of Actium (31 BCE), a landmark in Rome's passage from Republic to Empire. Some of the verses read:

92 Williams, *A letter from a merchant,* 6.

93 Jeremy Black, *Mapping Naval Warfare: A visual history of conflict at sea* (Osprey, 2017), 50.

> In those same Seas, where that fam'd *Cæsa*r fought,
> And where ad *Actium*, he such Glory got;
> Great *Albion*'s Navy did with Thunder roar,
> Dreadful to *Affrick*, and th'*Iberian* shore:
> In that renown'd *Cantabrian* Ocean, She
> Display'd Her *British* Flags of Victory.[94]

What is looming here is a metaphorization of the Mediterranean Sea—"those same Seas" that are one and the same from the Ionian to the Straits of Gibraltar—in search of Clio's blessings of the Navy's deeds. The poem seemed to suggest that Albion as the legitimate heir of the Roman Empire should lay claim to the *mare nostrum*. Browne's unsophisticated poetry (to which we will come back) reads like the first draft of a Mediterranean imperial project.

The Spanish retreat from the central and eastern parts of the sea, a growing and ubiquitous French naval presence, and the transformation of the British presence into military and commercial dominance: these were the main results of two and a half centuries of great power competition in the Mediterranean. But there were not only great-great powers. There was also a small-great power: the Dutch Republic. To grasp some aspects of her Mediterranean vicissitudes we have to turn back to the beginning of our period.

In the years between the formation of the Union of Utrecht in 1579 and the recognition of independence by Spain, Union ships were threatened not only by persistent Spanish enmity but also by British vessels. Given the Spanish watching of the Straits, this was certainly a major obstacle for Dutch Mediterranean trade. The conflict brought about, among others, the Dutch-Spanish battle in the Bay of Gibraltar of April 1607. According to instructions from the Spanish Crown, in the whole Mediterranean "English and Dutch ships had to be attacked and their goods seized even if the first came from neutral ports or the latter were transported by ships flying another flag."[95]

The situation led to a "natural" understanding with the rulers of the Moroccan and Algerian corsair seaports. "Rabat-Salé became, like Tetouan, an important corsair nucleus offering shelter to English and Dutch pirates as well as the expelled Moriscos."[96] The "Dutch Republic commissioned 130 privateers in the period 1606–1609 with official permission to attack the enemy anywhere at

94 Joseph Browne, *Albion's Naval Glory, or, Britannia's Triumphs: Poetical Essay Towards a Description of a Sea Fight Occasion'd by the late Engagement between the English, Dutch, and French Fleets in the Mediterranean Sea, August the 13th, 1704* (Francis Fawcet, 1705), 6–7; emphasis in original.

95 Tore, "Monarchia ispanica," 215.

96 García-Arenal, *The Moriscos in Morocco*, 325.

sea, to harass Spanish shipping and to bring profit to the treasury."[97] Although the Spanish-Dutch armed conflict resurged after a 12-year-long truce, "Dutch trade into the Mediterranean and to the Levant flourished in the first half of the seventeenth century." Dutch ships circumvented Spanish hostility by visiting the ports of Morocco and the North African Regencies "on their way to Italy, Livorno, Venice or the Levant."[98]

From the times of the Rebellion, the Dutch affronted several other wars "with the greater European powers, continuing through every decade from 1568 to 1715." Those wars "often hampered Dutch shipping. Luckily for the Republic, the shipping activities of its main competitor, England, suffered mostly just as much."[99] At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Mediterranean was but one theater in the worldwide "fierce competition between the English and Dutch companies."[100] Sharing anti-Spanish resentment was not sufficient to alleviate the animosity that later in the century would lead to a series of Anglo-Dutch armed conflicts. But in the Mediterranean, the common foe was strong enough to induce both to look for alternatives to a dependence on Spanish goodwill. They started competing for the best favors of Morocco and the North African Ottoman provinces, which they fought for in a long sequence of armed conflicts and peace treaties with these regencies, and of clashes with each other.

Maliciously denigrating Dutch naval prowess, English author Henry Blount wrote in the 1630s that the "maine strength of [the Turkish] Fleets are tall Ships taken from Hollanders; where the Cowardize of that Nation is made a Weapon against all Christendome."[101] When in 1655 a new Anglo-Spanish war broke out, the British forgot about the self-assigned speaker's role of "Christendome" to prop up their own system of treaties and peaceful arrangements with the Barbary Regencies, whereas the United Provinces' relationship with the most important of the Regencies, Algiers, remained unstable. Nonetheless, the Dutch remained on a par with their British competitors in the Mediterranean trade, drawing temporary advantage from new Anglo-Spanish hostili-

97 De Groot, "Ottoman North Africa," 131.

98 De Groot, "Ottoman North Africa," 133.

99 Magnus Ressel, "The Dutch-Algerian War and the Rise of British Shipping to Southern Europe (1715–1726)," *Cahiers de la Méditerranée* [online] 90 (2015): 2, accessed August 20, 2019, http://journals.openedition.org/cdlm/8011; regarding British and Dutch naval conflicts with Spain, see also Tore, "Monarchia ispanica," 215.

100 Franz Böni, *Piraterie und Marktwirtschaft. Beitrag der Piraterie im westlichen Mittelmeer zur Schaffung einer Marktwirtschaft und späterer Wettbewerbsbedingungen?* (UVK, 2008), 20.

101 Blount, *A Voyage*, 74.

ties.[102] Only the Dutch-Algerian war, which broke out shortly after the British conquest of Gibraltar, brought about "the structural loss of market share in Mediterranean shipping and trade by the Dutch to the advantage of the British."[103] Thanks to the hostilities between Britain and Spain in 1727–29 the Dutch managed one last time "to get ahead of their chief competitor," but after the war "British shipping into the Mediterranean surged ahead, and the Dutch were never again able to compete."[104]

Three decades ahead, during the Seven Years War, a British naval officer who assessed the opportunity to attack France simultaneously from the Mediterranean and the Channel wrote with some satisfaction that France and Great Britain were by now "the only two Powers that can, with any Propriety, be called Maritime; Holland no longer lays claim to the Title."[105] Yet, throughout the century Dutch mercantile presence in the Mediterranean remained strong enough to procure occasional annoyance to the British trade. If the complaints brought forward by an old member of the British Levant Company had some good reason, Egyptian cotton flew into the British market from the then Batavian Republic to the detriment of domestic merchants.[106] Rivalry characterized the Mediterranean commercial and naval presence of the two sea powers over the whole period under scrutiny in this chapter; however, both looked at it in the framework of a global competition, where the Mediterranean was seen as a member in the chain of intercontinental and colonial trade.

Diasporic Geographies of the Mediterranean

Like elsewhere, in the Mediterranean Britain clearly got the upper hand in the eighteenth century. Prior to that, the Dutch could spend some political and symbolic capital there that the British did not possess. This capital had been accumulated during their rebellion against the "Spanish oppressor," a struggle that yielded them the sympathies of Muslim countries that confronted Spain in the Mediterranean, as well as of religious minorities who suffered persecution in, and expulsion from, Spain. No wonder that the first Dutch envoy sent

102 Pagano de Divitiis, "An English Merchant," 12.

103 Ressel, "The Dutch-Algerian War," 2.

104 Ressel, "The Dutch-Algerian War," 12–13.

105 [Anonymous], *The Nature and Utility of Expeditions to the Coast of France, by an officer in the last expeditions* (Burnet, 1758), 26.

106 [Anonymous], *A short reply to Mr Eton's observations respecting the establishment of the Levant Company. By an old member of the Company* (n.n., 1799), 19–20.

to Constantinople in 1612, Cornelis Haga, could write back to his government that the Turks

> have the opinion of certain nations such as Jews and Moors whom they trust on the ground that they have become Turks. The Moors spoke highly in our favour, and sent some of their leading men to beg me to present their thanks for the benefits and the loyalty shown them by the subjects of our nation, in assisting them to leave Spain for Barbary. They praise our nation to the skies for the magnanimity displayed in the war with Spain.[107]

The Sephardic Jews and *Judeoconversos*, who numerously settled in North Africa, Egypt, the Levant, and the heartlands of the Ottoman Empire, also created dense trade and family networks with the Dutch Republic. "Amsterdam, the capital of the *Nação* in the seventeenth century – even more than the Italian cities – represented for *conversos* the promised land, both for the possibility of living openly as Jews and for the strength of the Dutch economy."[108] This gave the Dutch maritime trade a comparative advantage at least in the seventeenth century.

Many national or religious diasporas and trade communities had a geographical diffusion that included most of the Mediterranean shores. Moriscos, Sephardic Jews, and *Judeoconversos* are perhaps the population that most exemplarily could deliver "objective evidence" of the existence of a "Mediterranean World" in early-modern history. Following 1492, between 150,000 and 200,000 Jews were expelled, while around 50,000 chose to be baptized so they could stay. These *conversos* often returned to their previous religious practices, or in any case were suspected of such, and thus were subjected to persecution by the Inquisition and continued to migrate to find their safe haven elsewhere.

As an effect of the *Reconquista*, a great number of Muslims crossed the Straits from Grenada into Ceuta, Tangier, and other Maghreb areas. During the sixteenth century expulsion and emigration continued from the more northern Iberian areas taking mostly a route to Bordeaux, from there to Marseille or Toulon and by ship to the North African region, an itinerary with stopovers that could last years or decades. Finally, backed by a decision of the State Council in April 1609, the Crown of Castile decreed the General

107 Tijana Krstić, "Moriscos in Ottoman Galata, 1609–1620s," in *The Expulsion of the Moriscos from Spain*, ed. Mercedes García-Arenal and Gerard Wiegers (Brill, 2014), 275.

108 Natalia Muchnik, "Judeoconversos and Moriscos in the Diaspora," in *The Expulsion of the Moriscos from Spain*, ed. Mercedes García-Arenal and Gerard Wiegers (Brill, 2014), 422.

Expulsion of all Moriscos in the following years.[109] "Some 80,000 Moriscos went to Morocco from Andalusia, Extremadura, and Castile, and most of them settled close to Ceuta, Tangier, and Tetouan and other points of the Strait,"[110] and also Rabat-Salé, where some of them found shelter together with English and Dutch corsairs enhancing piracy, mainly directed against Spain. Others went to Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli, where they had the support of the Ottoman Sultan Ahmed I who sought to "ease the hardships of the refugees by sending letters to different European sovereigns asking for the Moriscos' safe passage as well as by ordering tax breaks for refugees who decided to settle in Tunis, Algiers and Anatolia."[111] Some estimates put the total number of Moriscos affected at "around eight hundred thousand people."[112] In any case, it was a number that profoundly changed the demography of North Africa and fueled the political climate by anti-Spanish resentment over a lost homeland, family ties and possessions.

Outside Spain the most active European points of contact between the two communities "were ports and cities in the South of France. But it is well known that aside from Marseille and Toulon, the ports to which most Moriscos arrived in order to take ship to the Maghreb, other regions also received groups of Moriscos."[113] Families of both groups rested or settled in southern France and the Maghreb, and the Jews massively in Italy, where even some Moriscos remained, albeit to a minor extent.[114] Many members of both communities took the route via Venice into Egypt and the heartlands of the Sultan. Jews were allowed to settle at Constantinople and Galata, in towns like Salonica, Sarajevo, and Adrianople, as well as in Anatolia (Bursa, Aydın, Tokat, Amasya), Syria, Palestine (Damascus, Jerusalem, Upper Galilee), Egypt, and other places, in some cases outnumbering the pre-existing local Jewish communities.

Notwithstanding the forcibly severed ties with the Iberian countries, both Sephardic Jewish and Morisco communities manifested their attachment to the place of origin by maintaining their Iberian dialects as a means of communitarian cohesion in the new context and as a commitment to the messianic promise of a future homecoming, a belief that "raised the profile of each group

109 Rafael Benítez Sánchez-Blanco, *Tríptico de la expulsión de los moriscos: El triunfo de la razón de estado* (PULM, 2012), 147–68.

110 García-Arenal, "The Moriscos in Morocco," 316.

111 Krstić, "Moriscos in Ottoman Galata," 270.

112 Matar, *Europe through Arab Eyes*, 14.

113 Muchnik, "Judeoconversos and Moriscos," 437.

114 Bruno Pomara Severino, *Rifugiati: I moriscos e l'Italia* (Firenze University Press, 2017), 15–16, 75, 278–79.

within its respective *Umma* or *Nação*."[115] Not all ties with the Iberian Peninsula were immediately cut off: there were clandestine visits or reimmigrations over the Straits, as well as the continuation of kinship or commercial relations for some time, albeit under a threat of repression and punishment that would never relent. In 1663 the Inquisition of Seville reaffirmed its opposition against Jews landing on Andalusian shores. In 1717, a Jewish emissary of the Moroccan Sultan Mulay Ismāʿīl was turned away because of his religion and even as late as 1786 the case of a Jew who intended to disembark in the port of Cadiz mobilized both Inquisition and local authorities, while the local Venetian consul and the ambassador in Madrid intervened in an apparent attempt at mediating and mitigating.[116]

The Ottoman Empire was of particular interest for Jewish and other merchant communities due to its immense internal market, its strategic hubs of Asiatic and European trade, and its manifold external connections. As a British geography book stated in the mid eighteenth century, the

> Turks have very curious and beautiful manufactures. The inland trade too, which the provinces, towns and inhabitants carry on with each other, and with foreign nations, is very considerable, though it is chiefly through the channel of the Jews and Armenians.[117]

The idea that Jews and Armenians single-handedly controlled Ottoman domestic trade had less to do with reality and more with the wishful thinking of Western merchants, who hoped to gain access to this vast commercial network through these minority groups.[118] Similar minority trade communities, which also included Greeks in the realm of maritime trade, generally acted as loyal subjects of the empire. Still, they reinforced their economic role through membership in diasporic networks that extended beyond Ottoman borders. From the Caucasus region Armenian traders spread to Constantinople and other Ottoman (and world) regions. They also "were in Smyrna beginning in the 1630s and used that port to ship their goods to Venice and Amsterdam. Their most important bridgehead in the west was the Republic of Venice."

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115 Muchnik, "Judeoconversos and Moriscos," 424.

116 Muchnik, "Judeoconversos and Moriscos," 431, Matar, *Europe through Arab Eyes*, 116 and ASVe, Senato, Archivio proprio Ambasciata Spagna, f 87 sf 99 Lettere del Console veneto in Cadice Spiridone Capitanachi ai suoi vice consoli ed altri all'amb. Veneta in Madrid, 1785–1790: letter by Capitan Pedro Sanchez Manuel Bernal, April 4, 1786; two letters by Consul Capitanachi to the Venetian ambassador in Madrid, May 2, 1786.

117 Fenning and Collyer, *A New System*, 10.

118 Fusaro, *Political Economies of Empire*, 87.

However, the Mediterranean-Atlantic and the Ottoman-Venetian axes were just two branches of the widely ramified Armenian commercial geography. Already in previous centuries Armenian outposts and networks had spanned from the Caucasus to West and South Asia as well as North-East Europe. In the early-modern period, Armenian activities were centered on the South Caucasian Arax valley first, then Isfahan, to engage "in long-distance trade from the second half of the sixteenth century, as their presence in all the important commercial centres of the Levant, the Mediterranean and as far away as in Mughal India indicates." However, with the "arrival of the European East India Companies in the waters of the Indian Ocean and their subsequent control of shipping lanes, the terms of trade had shifted against the Armenians."[119]

Nevertheless, their Ottoman basis still at the end of the eighteenth century represented a huge reservoir of work, trade, and consumption. The British merchant class was eager to conquer it but conscious also of the competing trade networks that formed the commercial backbone of the Sultan's lands.

> It may well be for the French, or Dutch, or such people, to level every thing, but England should preserve her old honours, rights, privileges, and dignities. It is unbecoming the grandeur of a kingdom like Great Britain, to have pedlars, hawkers and riders, running about the Turkish empire, as you recommend, to seek commissions of Turks, Jews and Infidels, and worse, of Greeks and Armenians, who would soon so over-stock the markets that no honourable trader, or good house would find any profit on their sales. Is this not ruining the trade, by letting in interlopers? (…) Pray would it be right to see Greek, Jew and Armenian houses established in London? and going down to Birmingham, Sheffield, Manchester, Norwich, &c. &c. and carrying the goods directly out of the country, without any English house having any profit on the business? What would become of the old traders?[120]

Greeks were rightly inserted here, because they dwelled all over the former Byzantine countries included in the Venetian domains and Ottoman Empire, in the Balkans, Epirus and Peloponnese, in the Aegean archipelago and Smyrna, Pontus and around the Black Sea, on the central and eastern Mediterranean islands, Egypt, and the Levant. Under Ottoman and Russian flags, Greek-owned merchant ships dominated the crucial grain trade and general

119 Sebouh Aslanian, "Trade Diaspora versus Colonial State: Armenian Merchants, the English East India Company, and the High Court of Admiralty in London, 1748–1752," *A Journal of Transnational Studies* 13, no. 1 (2004): 42, 45.

120 Merchant in Turkey [Anonymous], *A letter to Mr Eton, from a merchant in Turkey, in answer to a chapter in his Survey of the Turkish empire* (J. Mathews, 1799), 18, 22.

commerce between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Greek seafarers, who formed the core of the Ottoman merchant fleet in the Mediterranean, also sailed under English, Habsburg, Venetian, and Ragusan flags. Supported by a widespread network in major capitals and port cities of Europe, Asia, and Africa, Greek merchant houses extended their activity and influence, beyond their focus on the Black Sea and eastern Mediterranean, as far as the Indian Ocean and the Zambezi River.[121]

Other networks, such as those of Flemish, Italian, Swiss, or South German Protestant merchant families, contributed to the same phenomenon. For example, Corsican merchants and sailors played an important role in the seventeenth century, connecting North Africa with Tuscany, Genoa, and Marseille. This was especially significant after a Corsican-born former slave, Murād Qūrṣū, rose to become the Bey of Tunis, establishing a provincial dynasty that lasted for generations. Other Corsican converts also maintained ties to their homeland, leading among merchants to the formation of "transregional coalitions founded upon bi-religious family networks."[122] While Corsican merchant family networks combined knowledge of the religious and legal practices of various regions of the western Mediterranean, the geographic experience and mental representation of other such networks spanned in many cases over much greater distances without having necessarily a Mediterranean center. This makes it understandable why these communities remained fundamentally disinterested in fantasies regarding a "Mediterranean World," however well their life experience might seem fitting "objectively" with such an idea. But we should rather stick to the fact that they did not speak about and seemingly had no notion of such a "world." This silence also constitutes a material reality that should not be omitted to make a theory work.

Ottoman Geographies of the White Sea

On a similar note, the very same Ottoman Empire, which covered "more than a good two-thirds of the basins shoreline," could be considered as being "objectively" Mediterranean, even more so than the Spanish Kingdom or any other European power.[123] This may be held even more true as the Ottoman geographic self-understanding positioned the areas that Europeans called

121 Abulafia, *Mediterranean Encounters*, 3; see also, Gallant, *The Edinburgh History of the Greeks*, 24–26; Greene, *A Shared World*, 6; Greene, *Catholic Pirates and Greek Merchants*, 51, 112–17; Fusaro, *Political Economies of Empire*, 348.

122 Calafat, "Jurisdictional Pluralism in a Litigious Sea," 177; more in general, 154–57 and 177–78.

123 Tabak, *The Waning of the Mediterranean*, 36.

"Archipelago" and "Levant" within the central coordinates of their mental map, as they represented the southern maritime space along the principal axis of Turkish seafaring between Crimea and Alexandria.[124] This axis, which connected the Mediterranean with the Black Sea, cut across the very political center, leaving the Empire's two heartlands, "European Turkey" or the Balkans, and "Asian Turkey" or Anatolia, on both sides. Inheriting from Byzantium the centrality of Konstantiniyye and the idea of the "second Rome" (a kind of *translatio imperii*), the Ottoman Empire later infused this concept with an internal Muslim dimension through its conflict with the Shiite Safavids, its conquest of the Mamluk Sultanate, and its claim to the Caliphate—all despite the coexisting imaginative geographies centered around earlier Islamic capitals like Baghdad and Damaskus or Mecca.[125]

Thus, the "White Sea" held undoubtedly an important place in the Ottoman geographical imagination and imperial ideology. Yet the maps drawn by sixteenth-century geographer and seafarer Pīrī Re'īs show the same bias of interest-led geography and mental mapping that we have already detected in other cases, such as Venice. In his main work, "only 32 of the 214 charts in the second version of the book depict places in the central and western Mediterranean, mainly islands (Malta, Corsica, Majorca, etc.). Approximately 85 per cent of the charts (182 charts) depict the eastern Mediterranean and North Africa."[126] And as in the other cases, it should be stressed here as well that similar biases of interest reflected imaginative geographies. A Turkish portolan map from the mid-seventeenth century shows instead detailed entries of coastal cities and important trading cities far inland, covering the entire Mediterranean and large swaths of West Asian, European, and North African land.[127] As this document, along with other maps and descriptions, demonstrates, an objectifying geographical awareness developed also in the Ottoman Empire, as it was needed for the practical purposes of seafaring, trade, warfare, and political rule.

However, the outstanding importance of these places for Ottoman trade and geopolitics did not suffice to make of the Mediterranean itself the pivot

124 Rauwolf, "Travels," 71–72, describes the Ottoman maritime trade and navigation between Alexandria and the northern shores of the Black Sea, through which "Moscovites, Circasses, Cossackes" provided "Honey, Waxe, and especially Wood, and Slaves" to Turkey and Egypt for receiving "Flax, Sugar, Sherbets, Rice, Tapestry, Corne, and other Egyptian Commodities."

125 Emiralioğlu, *Geographical Knowledge and Imperial Culture*, 69–88.

126 Kahlaoui, *Creating the Mediterranean*, 214; also, Emiralioğlu, *Geographical Knowledge and Imperial Culture*, 99.

127 Pınar Emiralioğlu, "The Ottoman Enlightenment: Geography and Politics in the Seventeenth-and Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Empire," *The Medieval History Journal* 22, no. 2 (2019): 302–304.

of Ottoman imaginative geography. Turks and Ottoman subjects in general—officials, ambassadors, dignitaries, administrators, soldiers, merchants, mariners, scholars, workers, slaves, etc.—were present from central-west Asian and central-south European cities like Venice to the Sahel and East Africa, and from the North African Atlantic coast well into the heart of India.[128] For Turkish-Ottoman trade interests, the sea routes across the Indian Ocean, the Persian Gulf, and the Red Sea were hardly less vital than the Mediterranean routes. As a political and intellectual community, the Ottomans were familiar with a space much larger than the portions bathed by the Mediterranean Sea, which marked but one of their areas of influence rather than a "world" on its own (Figure 2.2).



FIGURE 2.2 Map of the Ottoman Empire. Hondius's edition of Mercator's "Atlas", 1607. Jodocus Hondius, *Gerardi Mercatoris atlas* (1607). Public domain, Wikimedia Commons

128 The "dominant elites in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century India were Turks and Persians"; Christopher Alan Bayly and Leila Fawaz, editors' introduction to *Modernity and Culture: From the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean* (Columbia University Press, 2002), 17; on long-standing Ottoman diplomatic and trade relations with East Africa and the Sahel region, see Rémi Dewière, "Borno in the Ottoman Archives (1574–1903)," *Eurasian Studies* 21 (2023): 151–85.

Although the "Mediterranean stood in the middle of the Ottoman realm, and it was the stage of many battles,"[129] after Lepanto the sea did not hold the same significance for the Ottoman Empire as it did for Genoa, Venice, Britain, France, or the Dutch Republic. Despite maintaining significant navies in the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea, and Indian Ocean, it was not a thalassocracy but a continental empire. It demonstrated an "extraordinary sensitivity" and administrative wisdom in adapting imperial rule to local conditions and securing its frontiers.[130] As Kaya Şahin has noted, after its foundation the Empire concentrated on "practical attempts at establishing territorial and economic control from western Iran to the Hungarian plains," a task that attracted political, military, and administrative efforts to the land rather than the sea.[131] The Ottoman domains were both a "subset of the new Eurasian empires" and a "hinge that connected (…) the eastern and western parts of Eurasia." They were involved in "the production of universal and transcendental political concepts that ranged from Timurid notions of divinely sanctioned sovereignty and European ideas of universal monarchy to a newly imagined Sunni identity."[132] Finally, they participated in the "transformation that some historians have interpreted teleologically as a climb toward modernity or some other stated or implied goal. Most of these changes touched the Ottoman Empire as much as they did the rest of Europe."[133] The Ottoman religious and imperial politics at the turn of the seventeenth century should also be seen, as Tijana Krstić observes, "within the broader context of an early-modern age of confessionalization, since it had as much to do with contemporary international political and religious developments."[134]

In other words, those developments were not necessarily solely Latin-Christian European ones and were not just a spillover effect or passive reception of "western teachings" and "modernity," as western Europeans love to have it.[135] In fact, during the same period, the transfer of teleology from religious dogma to the political realm increased in several areas of Abrahamic religion. While reformation and counter-reformation unsettled the political communities of Western Christianity, "political eschatology took a powerful

129 Emiralioğlu, *Geographical Knowledge and Imperial Culture*, 115.
130 Greene, "The Ottoman Experience," 89.
131 Kaya Şahin, *Empire and Power in the Reign of Süleyman: Narrating the Sixteenth-Century Ottoman World* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 10.
132 Şahin, *Empire and Power*, 9–10.
133 Daniel Goffman, *The Ottomans and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 18.
134 Krstić, "Moriscos in Ottoman Galata," 272.
135 Emiralioğlu, "The Ottoman Enlightenment," 300–301.

and significant form [also] in the Islamic world in the sixteenth century."[136] This world was represented mainly by the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires and their entangled, if frequently clashing, cultures and politics. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries some Enlightenment strands of thought and heterodox confessional sects of Protestant derivation even nurtured theological sympathies with the Islamic rejection of the trinity, which is nothing short of the crucial point of theological dissent between the two religions.[137]

Arab Geographies of the Greek and Western Sea

If the future construction of a Mediterranean *Erdgebiet* or "world" was based on an eschatological vision of history, why did Turks, Muslim Arabs, Jews, and even Greek Orthodox and Levantine Christians find it so difficult to embrace? The reason could hardly lie in religion per se, since the teachings of all branches of Abrahamic religion tend to facilitate an eschatological understanding of history. Rather, their reluctance stemmed from divergent spatial axes in their own historical experience and mental mapping, combined with the increasingly supremacist and colonial connotations of the European project. Historically, the Mediterranean area, including the Maghreb and the Iberian Peninsula, had been all but marginal for the geographical imagination within the Islamic context. According to Tarek Kahlaoui, pre-modern Islamic mapping of the Mediterranean already comprised "an anthropogenic space extending beyond the shores," thus also assuming a meaning that transcended the maritime dimension within the context of a historical narrative of redemption.[138] The *baḥr al-rūm* and *baḥr al-maghrib* and the lands that bordered them to the south and the west represented the western and south-western geographical quarter of the Islamic *ummah* centered around Mecca, Medina, Jerusalem, and Damascus, which also extended to the Balkans, the western, southern, and central Asian landmass as well as the maritime spaces of the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.

Against this background of spatial imagination and memory, in the way it would be construed and proposed, the modern European "Mediterranean World" would be visibly the project of "someone else," unacceptable for cul-

136 Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "The politics of eschatology: a short reading of the long view," in *Historical Teleologies in the Modern World*, ed. Henning Trüper et al. (Bloomsbury, 2015), 34.

137 Mehmet Karabela, *Islamic Thought Through Protestant Eyes* (Routledge, 2021), 7–8.

138 Kahlaoui, *Creating the Mediterranean*, XI, 25.

tural and geopolitical reasons as it revealed its secularized missionary fanaticism and a western European colonial hubris from day one of its inception. It should be emphasized that this "someone else" was not Christianity. "In the age of European expansion and exploration – writes Nabil Matar – only among the Muslims was Christianity seen as part of the 'Islamic' legacy, and not as a foreign religion." Christian figures were worshipped by Muslims, as "Isa and Maryam were Qur'anic and therefore Arabic and Muslim – not foreign and alien."[139] Initially, in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, this "someone else" was not yet synonymous with "Europe" either, as the Latin-Germanic and Catholic-Protestant appropriation of the geographical term was still relatively recent. But the menacing otherness was hard to overlook. Against the backdrop of historical experience and memory, it smelled far too "Frankish" and "crusaderish" to even infatuate most of the Orthodox or other local Christians, let alone Islamic subjects of the Ottoman Empire.[140]

Moreover, in the early-modern period the European—"Christian"—expansionist drive nurtured by economic interest was not reciprocated by Arabic Muslim actors in the Mediterranean Sea. Since the Arab expansion in and around the western Mediterranean had come to a halt in the late Middle Ages, the Italian traders "were not forced to compete with Muslim merchants operating the same trade routes in the reverse direction."[141] During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the basic pattern remained similar, not least because the regions of the immense Ottoman Empire satisfied their demand through internal rather than external trade. The Empire's provinces imported timber, iron, lead, tin, and other raw materials and semifinished products needed for shipbuilding and warfare, but apart from woollen cloth and other more specific items, they had relatively little interest in European manufactured goods prior to mechanization.[142] Islamic authorities at times imposed trade and travel restrictions on their own subjects, both for economic protectionism and because safe passage in Christian ports was not guaranteed. Various European powers also restricted the incoming traffic of the North African and Levantine subjects, partly to protect trade monopolies and partly out of fear of industrial espionage in the armament and shipbuilding sectors.[143]

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139 Matar, Europe Through Arab Eyes, 33.

140 Evgeniya Prusskaya, "Arab Chronicles as a Source for Studying Bonaparte's Expedition to Egypt," *Napoleonica. La Revue* 24, no. 3 (2015): 56.

141 Abulafia, *Mediterranean Encounters,* 11.

142 Rutledge, *Sea of Troubles*, 49–51.

143 Matar, *Europe Through Arab Eyes*, 10–13.

This said, we cannot know how many merchants and seamen whose ships were going on anchor in European ports under the label of "Turkish ships" were actually manned with captains and crews of Arabic or other tongues spoken in the Levant. Egyptian merchants and seafarers were most probably among them. On the whole, however, it seems that people from Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula were less active in the Mediterranean Sea. As a consequence, it is hard to presume that in their own geographical mind the sea would occupy a central position.

For Egyptians and Arabs in general, the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden were of greater interest: for hosting on their coasts important holy sites of Muslim tradition; for being crossed by African pilgrims of Muslim, Christian, and Jewish faith heading to Mecca, Medina, Jerusalem, and other holy sites, or heading back home; for connecting the maritime traffic arriving through the Indian Ocean from Surat and other places with the Mediterranean circuits via al-Quṣayr, Suez (*al-Suways*), Cairo (*al-Qāhirah*), Damietta (*Dumyāṭ*), Rosetta (*Rashīd*), and Alexandria (*al-Iskandarīyah*); for representing the maritime trade in the Red Sea between Mocha (*al-Mukhā*), Jiddah, and Suez a conspicuous source of fee and toll revenues for the Meccan Sharifate (*Sharāfat Makka*); for being an important crossroads of African-Arab commercial exchange, as "Arabia's towns were dependent on supplies from North-East Africa, especially grain, cattle, cereals, animal products, skins, hides, dried vegetables, and sugar."[144] Finally, the area itself was the origin of long-distance exports, especially coffee and mother-of-pearl.

Although the polities in the hinterlands were mainly inland oriented, those waters were vital to them. And not only to them: the area became the object of great-power competition after Egypt fell under Ottoman rule and the Portuguese expanded their influence on the western Indian Ocean and in East Africa.[145] Since the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden had some features in common with the Mediterranean Sea, the prevailing interpretative model of the latter has also been applied to them as well. According to Jonathan Miran, the Red Sea is also "a region *sui generis* characterized by multilayered, intercon-

144 Jonathan Miran, "Space, Mobility, and Translocal Connections across the Red Sea Area since 1500," *Northeast African Studies* 12, no. 1 (2012): xviii. Not by chance, Campbell's fictional traveler Edward Brown finds in Port Suez exactly "three Ships there, one Turkish, one Arabian, and one Indian Vessel"; see Campbell, *The travels of Edward Brown*, vol. 2, 65.

145 Michel Tuchscherer, "Trade and Port Cities in the Red Sea-Gulf of Aden Region in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century," in *Modernity and Culture: From the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean*, ed. Christopher Alan Bayly and Leila Fawaz (Columbia University Press, 2002), 28–45.

nected and overlapping circuits, nodes and networks operating within it, while still linked to both the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean areas" and "an arena of circuits and connectivities characterized by brisk flows and criss-crossing of people, goods and ideas across this area."[146]

Atlantic Geographies of the Maghreb's Modernity

The above lines may be sufficient here to explain why in Egyptian and Arab mental mapping the Mediterranean Sea did not enjoy centrality. The interest in maritime trade was lesser, while the sense of threat was greater. In *al-Maghrib*, however, the focus shifted compared to *al-Mashriq*.

In 1706, two years after the British had captured Gibraltar, the Moroccan Sultan Mulay Ismā'īl, in a letter to the London Parliament, requested British support for the liberation of Ceuta. He went so far as to claim, "We are Arabs who do not make much use of the strait, for we are not people of ships or sails." While this was an understatement, the pervasive anxiety surrounding the sea as a source of danger, and the geographical focus on the *Ummat al-Islāmīyah*, are hardly in doubt.[147]

One may wonder whether this was seen differently from the Maghrebin tributaries to the Sublime Porte, who possessed long Mediterranean coasts and political centers gravitating around seaports, especially the capital cities of Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli. Together with some minor seaports, their harbors were brokers of agricultural export products of the hinterland, such as "corn, oil, barilla, wool, skins, sena and dates," which were shipped to other countries bordering with the Mediterranean Sea or the Atlantic Ocean.[148] The Berber hinterland has been described by Europeans as largely inland-oriented according to the typical traits that allegedly characterize the Islamic peasant and nomad cultures, which were said to have "infiltrated" the hinterlands of the Mediterranean's southern and eastern rims. According to Braudel, similar traits were a negation of maritime culture, as "the conflict between the Mediterranean and the neighbouring desert is something more than plough versus flock. It is the clash between two economies, civilizations, societies and arts of living."[149] Those arts of living must have appeared as yielding poor fruits, at least in the eyes of John Campbell, who wrote that "the Mohammedans from Algiers, Tunis, Tripoli, Fez and Morocco" were "flying from the Poverty of their

146 Miran, "Space, Mobility," xi.
147 Matar, *Europe Through Arab Eyes*, 228; also, 12–16.
148 *Considerations on the nurseries*, 9.
149 Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, vol. 2, 180.

native Countries" to Egypt, "to pick up a miserable Subsistence, by all Sorts of slavish Employments, or by downright begging."[150]

Most European observers "probably thought of the regencies as little more than anarchic, piratical rabbles, but this was far from reality: in fact they were governed by quite complex bureaucracies." Algiers, for example, ruled over 140,000 square kilometers of land, of which 43% consisted of regions in Kabylia and the desert and oases under self-government of Berber clans or (semi) nomadic Arab tribes, who however recognized the tributary authority of the Dey and, through him, that of the Emperor and Caliph.[151] The geographical juxtaposition that Braudel insisted on was far from representing a political opposition or cultural hiatus, as the southern lands of the provinces were an important component of the overall arrangement. The Ottoman Sahara was organized around its network of caravan routes mostly ending in the port cities. Some of these routes lead deep into Central Africa, others from the west to the east. "In each city or oasis, local notables negotiate the modalities of local imperiality within the margins of autonomy of management, taxation and the imperatives of defence."[152] European observers tended to mentally disintegrate this arrangement by creating a deep imaginary divide between a familiar coast and an alien, savage, desert. But even without Braudel's fundamental distinction of "two civilizations" it remains of course a truism that, like any other place, in the North African provinces as well, average inlanders living on agriculture or husbandry had a less vivid imagination of maritime geography than compatriots living on the sea.

No doubt, the corsair seafarers of Barbary—who were but one, if important, component of society—followed another way of life than a mountaineer or nomad in the desert. They who represented the most important column of the local maritime economy had a "holistic" knowledge of the Mediterranean, as they were familiar with the Ottoman rims and at the same time spread fear and panic over almost all Christian coasts. They also mostly had political backing from the rulers of their regencies, and even from the Ottoman government they were enjoying "a kinde of libertie" and had approved "that all Christians may be Prize." With the "excuse of their disobedience, and Pyracie, [the Sultan] infests those Christians, who being in League with him, hee could by no other pretence weaken; and this also in case of necessitie, keeps him an exer-

150 Campbell, *The travels of Edward Brown*, vol. 2, 165.

151 Rutledge, *Sea of Troubles*, 85–86.

152 Nora Lafi, "L'Empire ottoman en Afrique: perspectives d'histoire critique," *Cahiers d'histoire. Revue d'histoire critique* [online] 128, no. 2–9 (2015): 4, accessed March 9, 2025, https://journals.openedition.org/chrhc/4505.

cised Fleet for Warre."[153] Indeed, the states of Barbary, "upon summons, are obliged to furnish the Grand Signor with their whole naval force."[154]

Nevertheless, for the Ottoman authorities obtaining obedience from the Moorish seafarers was probably a true challenge rather than just a feigned one. During periods of peace with the Republic of Venice, the Sultan extended the prohibition of looting and kidnapping also to Venetian coastlands and subjects, but these orders were not always respected. When he ordered Tunis and Algiers to release the slaves and restitute the goods taken in raids on the Adriatic and Ionian coasts and islands in late 1626, Tunis, which was closer within the Sultan's reach, was quick in giving in, whereas the negotiations with Algiers took time.[155] According to Blount, the Barbary pirates "never make Booty of Turkish Goods, or Subject, though a Christian" and the Ottomans were contrasting "the Pyracy so well, that the Gallyes, and Vessels of Argiers, will not come within the Dardanelli."[156] But according to Dumont, they were "equally dreaded by the Turks, Greeks and Franks." During his stay in Smyrna, one day Dumont was "informed that five Barbary Vessels anchor'd this Morning at Fosche [*Phocaea, Foça*], which is a little Harbour at the Mouth of the Gulph." Those "insolent Scoundrels, from whom the Franks receive a Visit once every Year, tho' they wou'd gladly dispence with so troublesome a piece of Civility," created tumult with the local, mostly Greek, population.[157] Several local Ottoman governors offered shelter to pirates and apparently made affairs with them even against the imperial orders.[158] Not all encounters, however, were frightening. At Lampedusa, a Catholic eremite who in addition to his own rocky chapel was also looking after "another grotto, in which is the tomb of a Turkish saint," remained "unmolested by the Mahometans, who frequently come to Lampedosa to water their ships and gallies."[159]

Actually, the relationship between North African and European naval and maritime activities went well beyond occasional raids, snatchings, boarding for prey, and war. It went even beyond the deep-seated horror of coast dwellers of being depredated and raped, of ship owners of being expropriated, of sailors of being enslaved, which continued to reign even when, in the late eighteenth century, those raids had almost disappeared or at least visibly

153 Blount, *A Voyage*, 72.
154 Montague Sandwich, *A Voyage*, 195.
155 Zahirović, *The Register*, 6–7.
156 Blount, *A Voyage*, 72; on the protection of Christian and Jewish subjects under Ottoman law, see White, *Piracy and Law in the Ottoman Mediterranean*, 25.
157 Dumont, *A New Voyage*, 301.
158 Zahirović, *The Register*, XVII, 54, 84, 87.
159 Montague Sandwich, *A Voyage*, 489.

diminished.[160] On the contrary, the relationship between North African and European naval and maritime activities was deep and structural. From the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, hundreds, if not thousands, of European ships became a prey of North African pirates on both sides of the Straits of Gibraltar, a "habit" that European "privateers" and Maltese pirates reciprocated. During the heyday of the Mediterranean *corso*, the early seventeenth century piracy from the North African regencies and Moroccan coastal cities was a particularly pronounced phenomenon. It gradually subsided under the pressure of changing power dynamics in the eighteenth century.

That the "particular vulnerability of European shipping to Muslim corsairs in this region influenced the fate of important segments of the Dutch and British economies" produced a double effect.[161] First, it repeatedly triggered armed clashes between the naval forces of countries like Britain, France, the Dutch United Provinces, and even Denmark on the one hand, and the North African ones on the other; second, it simultaneously intensified trade and diplomatic ties between the same parties (as well as with Genoa and Tuscany), leading to the signing of numerous treaties on commerce and navigational security. Spain, and initially Venice, opposed such treaties, arguing that the Regencies were inherently lawless pirate organizations. Meanwhile, another interpretation of European public law held that privateering and corsair activities were not necessarily illegal piracy if conducted between warring parties. Based on this assumption, peace agreements were repeatedly drawn up that included rules governing shipping, ransoms for captives, trade, and legal transactions. Punitive actions of war were also taken when one party deemed these agreements violated—a frequent occurrence due to disagreements over the attribution and legal status of goods transported on behalf of persons or states other than the ship owners.[162]

The overall effect was that the North African provinces and the Atlantic Sea powers in particular became, willingly or unwillingly, partners in Mediterranean affairs. According to Matar, "by the second half of the seventeenth century, European powers such as France and Britain had acquired the military edge over the Magharibi to force on them treaties that prohibited anyone other than their own traders (and only those in the chartered or royal companies) from commercial travel. The Europeans wanted to monopolize trade in the Mediterranean and made every effort to exclude rivals, both Christian and

160 Panzac, "Une activité en trompe-l'œil," 139 ; Davis, *Christian Slaves*, xiv–xvi.

161 Ressel, "The Dutch-Algerian War," 2.

162 Calafat, "Ottoman North Africa and ius publicum europæum," 175–82; Calafat, "Jurisdictional Pluralism in a Litigious Sea," 148–52, 159–70.

non-Christian." The economic competition was accompanied by a strengthening of European linguistic and cultural influence among the educated elites of North Africa and their recognition of the technological superiority of the European seafaring nations, especially in the areas of shipbuilding and armaments. Already in the sixteenth century, a French convert to Islam who lived in Tunis expressed regret for the Arabs' descent from their former wisdom into a "barbarity" that he deemed even steeper than that the "Greeks in Athens" had fallen into after the classical age.[163] It is difficult to assess whether such views were widespread among converts, but if they were, they may have implanted some self-orientalizing elements into the local society.

The minority share of population of the Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli regencies that was directly involved in maritime diplomacy, trade, ransom or danegeld collection, piracy and warfare, as well as the governing elites, given their intense connections with Europe and Europeans and their familiarity with the European and Asiatic shores of the Mediterranean, were "objectively" in a discrete position to imagine some sort of "Mediterranean World." But they did not. To put it in slightly ironical terms, they rather skipped the "world-historical" step of "Mediterranean civilization" to jump directly into the subsequent "modernity" phase of the "passage west." North African corsairs—including corsairs from Morocco and Spanish Ceuta—operated "both in the western basin of the middle sea and, even in the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, in Atlantic waters beyond the Straits."[164] Hercules's pillars apparently had no symbolic value for them either as their ships equally rode the waves of the Mediterranean Sea and those of the Atlantic Ocean down the African coast and up to Flanders, Britain, and even Iceland. But this was just the nautical side of the coin.

Not only were the personnel on corsair ships to a certain extent composed of European *renegados*, as we have already seen. According to Böni, in European countries there was also "a need for the supply of stolen goods that were either otherwise difficult to obtain at all, or only by paying high duties or inflated monopoly prices." Under the regime of the regulated economies of the time the piracy-based commercial chain had an "influence on trade in the sense of more competition," fostering the unfolding of an unregulated market niche.[165] How that competitive business model worked was described with a moralizing undertone by Prussian Geographer Büsching:

163 Matar, *Europe Through Arab Eyes*, 12, 191; see also 118–35.

164 Heywood, "Ideology and the profit motive," 19.

165 Böni, *Piraterie und Marktwirtschaft*, 24.

> One of the most lucrative trades for the Europeans who reside in Barbary is that of the prey, which they buy from the pirates who turn to their home ports. Since these pirates prey on everything that falls into their hands, they sometimes find goods that they cannot easily sell in their country, such as salted fish, meat, wine, spirit, beer and other similar goods. To get rid of them, they are forced to sell such merchandise to the Europeans, who buy it cheaply, and thus profit from the misfortunes of their compatriots, and perhaps friends or relatives, that is, at the cost of the tears of so many unhappy people. The Consuls themselves are those who set an example to others; they, who are sent expressly to safeguard the benefit of their nations, in fact help in harming them. Such is the character of the European merchant, who is insensitive to the stimuli of honour and humanity, and incapable of generous, noble sentiments …[166]

During the first half of the eighteenth century, the "market-friendly" phenomenon that undermined the privileged oriental trade monopoles must have assumed such a systematic character that the anonymous author of the *Considerations* exhorted the British authorities "to employ none but proper people to be consuls in those parts; persons whose integrity can be depended upon."[167] Probably, not a small part of the related trade of stolen goods was Mediterranean trade in its North-West European meaning, as the low-cost merchandise left the Straits heading to the free markets on British or Dutch and other ships.

Not all Barbary corsairs of Christian origins were Spanish, French, Italian, Slav, or Greek *renegados* with a past of being captives or slaves. Ceuta, the Spanish enclave in Barbary, also participated in the business, with Catholic corsairs who were also raiding "Christian" ships, sure that complicit Ceuta courts would declare their loot for *buena presa.*[168] As for the regencies, in the seventeenth century many pirates, Catholic and Protestant, immigrated voluntarily from North European seafaring nations to become entrepreneurs and seamen in the promising corsair business. "After the end of Anglo-Spanish hostilities in 1603 most of the English privateers withdrew, but some chose to

166 Büsching, *Nuova Geografia*, vol. 29, 22–23.

167 *Considerations on the nurseries for British seamen*, 12.

168 Still in 1785, the Ceuta corsairs Francisco Ruiz and Francisco Acosta were accused of having captured nine Venetian vessels, most of them on their way back from England or Lisbon to Venice, Genoa or Naples. The Spanish central state tried to oppose the phenomenon. ASVe, Senato, Archivio proprio Ambasciata Spagna, f 103, sf 123, Materie diverse, carte relative ad affari pubblici, 1765–1793, Copia de la Sentencia, y decreto de S.M. Supremo Consejo de Guerra di Madrid 5 Junio 1785.

continue overtly as pirates, joining the Barbary corsairs and greatly enhancing their aggressive power."[169] The same holds true for Dutch privateers, who after the end of the war with Spain in 1648 remained in Algiers and became "Ottoman corsairs" to not renounce their lucrative revenue. Even earlier, in 1626, "fifty-five of the principal corsair captains of the fleet of Algiers were Dutchmen by origin," some of whom would become important commanders of the Ottoman Navy, others commanding Turkish mercantile fleets in the Atlantic. Like the other regencies, Algiers, a dynamically "expanding centre of trade and shipping, could not do without European trade and manpower. Sailors and nautical technicians from southern and western Europe, Dutchmen for instance, could find ample employment there."[170]

To obtain what they needed for navigation and warfare, Tripoli, like the other regencies, "since the seventeenth century included in the treaties signed with certain European states clauses stipulating the supply of what would now be called 'strategic materials'", such as barrels of powder, balls, cables, ship masts from the Dutch Provinces, or bullets for pirate armaments and iron bars from Sweden.[171] The northern European "relations with Barbary [were] not governed by the Ottoman capitulations but the result of negotiated international treaties in the modern sense," being bilateral and providing, on paper, for clauses of reciprocal economic and strategic advantage, in fact ever more biased towards European interests as time went by. The "special relationship of Ottoman Barbary with European powers from the seventeenth till the early nineteenth century" was "characterized by its modern style more or less conforming to established European diplomatic and legal usage."[172]

When at the end of the seventeenth century Dumont wrote that the Barbary pirates "flock from all parts of Africk to the Sea-Coast, where they find on board the Ships a Sanctuary that secures 'em from being made accountable for their past Offences, and are at the same time priviledg'd to re-act their former Barbarities without control,"[173] he elegantly omitted that those "barbarians" had actually flocked also, if not even more so, from the new Atlantic homelands of "liberty" and "civility," perhaps to act in the "backward" Mediterranean as agents of economic and legal "modernization." This, however, adhered

169 Andrews, *Ships, Money and Politics*, 115.
170 De Groot, "Ottoman North Africa," 132.
171 Panzac, "Une activité en trompe-l'œil," 130–31.
172 De Groot, "Ottoman North Africa," 136, 143.
173 Dumont, *A New Voyage*, 302.

to the "passage west" of the "wider Mediterranean," a subsequent Atlantic declination of the Mediterranean metaphor Dumont could not yet be aware of. So, he kept spinning (and perhaps was himself a victim of) the narrower Mediterranean spatial imaginary of barbarity versus civility that we will discuss in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

Europeanizing the Middle Sea

Looking back from where we stand, we recognize various narrative elements that would later flow into the mainstream idea of a "Mediterranean World." In the initial phase, a portentous one was "Christian Europe," a formerly unknown concept that had been shaped in the fifteenth century to morph over the following centuries into a "Europe" compatible with a plurality of adjectives. Beyond the practical competition and, sometimes, visceral enmity between European powers in the Mediterranean basin, step-by-step representations of "Christendom" mixed with Europeanness to a point at which they overlapped largely with, and were partly absorbed by, the geographic concept of "Europe."[1]

As far as the maritime space of the Middle Sea was concerned, in the process its major islands were all claimed to be European but one, Cyprus, thus Europeanizing Crete and other islands that the classical Greek concept had not considered European and even explicitly excluded from "Europe."[2] So, with the partial exception of Cyprus and the Levant's coastal region, which in some mappings were not even included within the "Mediterranean," the maritime space was suggested to be European altogether, whether under Christian rule or not (yet).[3] Thus, in the European mind, "Africa" and "Asia" began on some small islands off their coasts at best, and from there they were pushed by imagination beyond the coastline into the hinterland, attributing them a continental character rather than a maritime one.[4] In the twentieth century, Braudel would sum up the result of this intellectual development under the dictum of the "infiltration from the steppe." The "movements of nomads from the steppe to the coast, then from the sea back to the desert," together with their customs and religion, were depicted as something alien to

1 Cardini, *Le radici cristiane dell'Europa*, 11; Petri, *A Short History*, 17–45.

2 Fenning and Collyer, *A New System*, 3; Herodotus, *The Persian Wars*, 496.

3 Thomas Salmon, *A New Geographical and Historical Grammar: Wherein the Geographical Part is Truly Modern* (James Meuros, 1767), 30, where the "Mediterranean Sea" includes the Archipelago and Candia, but neither the Levantine nor the Adriatic and Ionian Islands.

4 As Molly Green explains: "Since the sultan's navy was largely absent from the Mediterranean after the sixteenth century, it is as if the Ottoman Empire stopped at the shoreline." Greene, *A Shared World*, 6.

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the original "Mediterranean World," maritime and European in character.[5] When this development was in its earlier stages, in the eighteenth century, it began to make Ottoman rule over the Archipelago and the Peloponnese appear increasingly unacceptable to European eyes.

When we insert these intellectual and ideological changes into the context of worldwide European colonial expansion, in which indeed they happened to come forth, we are able to understand them as regional aspects of the modern Western world view that was building up during those centuries. That "Europeans may justly claim a peculiar pre-eminence over the rest of the inhabitants of the Globe" was a basic axiom of Büsching's *New System of Geography* that very few, if any, of his European readers would doubt in the slightest.[6] For non-European riparian countries of the Mediterranean, this meant that Europeans would ever more openly and self-righteously lay claim over Ottoman territories and manifest their "historic right" to scrutinize and judge these countries, exploit their resources, meddle with their affairs, and ultimately overwhelm them.

Significant in this context was the commercial and demographic penetration of the Holy Land, which after the 1516 Ottoman takeover witnessed not only an initial setback before later growing again but also a durable social change since the once prevailing travels of nobles tainted with crusade nostalgia appeared to be replaced by those of "burghers and clerics."[7] Also, it appears that over the period here under scrutiny, that is, from the late sixteenth to the late eighteenth century, the formerly despised Greek or Armenian Orthodox, Coptic, Syriac, and other native Christians were gradually readmitted to a quasi-status of "brethren" to be freed from the Ottoman yoke—in no unconditioned way, however, but when such a claim suited European ambitions. Another important strand of thought suggested that on the heels of the Renaissance the artistic heritage of the Roman Empire as well as of Greek and even Egyptian antiquity was an entirely rightful heritage of the Latin-Germanic world, which thanks to its science and reason, and the rediscovery of ancient thought and beauty, was the only one entitled to catalogue, protect, and "secure," that is, loot, that heritage wherever located.

In the meantime, European powers, while competing with each other for greater influence, increasingly interfered with internal Ottoman affairs, trying

5 Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, vol. 1, 177.

6 Büsching, *A New System*, vol. 1, 57.

7 Bart Holterman, "Pilgrimages in Images: Early Sixteenth-Century Views of the Holy Land with Pilgrims' Portraits as Part of the Commemoration of the Jerusalem Pilgrimage in Germany" (M.A. diss., University of Utrecht, 2013), 20; accessed May 7, 2025, https://studenttheses.uu.nl/handle/20.500.12932/13159.

to drive wedges between sects, linguistic groups, as well as peripheral rulers and the center and possibly eroding or subverting the Empire's power structures. Religiously laden *Reconquista* fantasies regarding North Africa, still influential in the Iberian context, sometimes mixed with others morphed into "enlightened" and "lawful" war-on-piracy expeditions of European powers against the Barbary regencies, alternated by commercial treaties that subtly attributed to these same countries under Ottoman rule a quasi-sovereign status. European great-power interference worked toward political and religious splits in the Levant and the Maghreb, and ultimately the breakaway of Egypt. From time to time, it came to openly manifested ambitions of colonial conquest regarding Ottoman-ruled lands, from the Peloponnese or Archipelago islands to Egypt and the North African provinces.

That said, we should caution the reader that the period between the late sixteenth and the late eighteenth century was a long period that we try to condense here into a few pages, an operation that cannot avoid prospective distortions and a loss of differentiation. By and large, we should bear in mind that the above-mentioned intellectual and political developments initially surfaced only slowly, occasionally, and disorderly, before they contributed to a composite but more coherent European concept of the Mediterranean. Initially many of the fantasies of superiority and colonial conquest seemed devoid of realism, as the Ottoman Empire still stood strong. Yet, over time they intensified and matured to a point at which they appeared realistic. So, also from a point of view of economic and military power and not just for an intellectual development of ideas, in the last years of the eighteenth century, the time seemed ripe for drawing the contours of a "Mediterranean World."

1 When History Started to Matter

On the heels of Humanism and Renaissance, the pre-Christian past, especially that of Greece, the Roman Empire, Ancient Egypt, and to a minor extent even the Phoenicians, was subjected to a wave of intellectual reappraisal and aesthetic affection among the educated elites not just of the neo-Latin-speaking countries but perhaps even more so of North European ones, with the exceptional French privilege of being a part of both. And in the typical vein of dawning bourgeoise Western modernity, wherever an aesthetic affection arose, the search for an opportunity to make money from it could hardly be far away.

The Republic of Venice had a centuries-old tradition of seizing the symbolic insignia of conquered polities to incorporate them into its monumental self-representation, inventing a classical heritage, forging "a connection to the

great republics and empires of the past" and enacting "the imperial topos of *translatio imperii et studii*, the transfer of power and learning from one empire to another." During the War of Morea in the late seventeenth century, when archaeology had become fashionable and private relic-collecting a lucrative business, "Venetian officials became actively involved in the excavation of antiquities in the Peloponnese, and their reports extensively recorded archaeological sites and surviving objects."[8]

Similarly, in 1628, corsair philosopher Kenelm Digby wrote of his days spent on Delos and Mykonos "looking for antiquities." As the treasure hunt there was apparently not satisfactory enough, "I went with most of my shippes to Delphos, (…) to avayle myself of the convenience of carrying away some antiquities there, I busied them [the sailors] in rolling of stones downe to the sea side, which they did with eagernesse as though it had bin the earnestest businesse that they came out for, and they mastered prodigious massie weightes; but one stone, the greatest and fairest of all, containing 4 statues, they gave over after they had been, 300 men, a whole day about it."[9]

In the French as well as the British cases, the cultural appropriation of classical heritage around the Mediterranean became a more systematically organized effort from the mid seventeenth century, when after the foundation of the Royal Society in 1660 and the Académie Royale des Sciences in 1666, "the need for a new form of specialized, itinerant researcher or traveler-observer rapidly emerged as an essential component of these institutions." In the Mediterranean context, the *voyage philosophique* "became the basis for a distinctively Enlightenment approach to reinterpreting elements of classical antiquity, notably the poetry of Homer and the architecture of Greece."[10] During his 1735–36 philosophical travels, French Jesuit poet and playwright Joseph de La Porte came to Nio to look after Homer's remains:

> I hurried to get to Nio and wanted to get off at the place where they allege that Homer's tomb is to be found. When this great poet travelled from Samos to Athens, he fell ill on the ship, and was put ashore at Nio, where he also died. Since I was otherwise unable to honour his memory, for a long time I looked at the place where the priceless remains of this great man are supposed to be kept, and after I had wandered the whole area to discover traces of what I was look-

8 Stouraiti, *War, Communication, and the Politics of Culture*, 195–96, 201.

9 Digby, *Journal of a Voyage,* 56–57.

10 Armstrong, "Travel and Experience in the Mediterranean," 236, 254.

> ing for, I found at last nine large pieces of marble, presumably erected on this site in honour of the nine muses who so much favoured his writings.[11]

A few years earlier, in 1725, a mesmerized John Durant Breval wrote after his visit to Selinunte in Sicily that the "Ruins of its amazing Temples, and other publick Structures, have not their Equal, in all likelihood, in our Age, on this Side [of] Palmyra or Egypt, and are a Demonstration beyond any other that Europe affords, how far the Antients exceeded the Moderns, not only in a great Taste of Architecture, but likewise in their Skill in Mechanicks, by raising to such an Height such unwieldy and ponderous Bodies."[12]

"The Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns"

Breval's demonstration of the superiority of the classical model, if not technical, at least conceptual, and aesthetical, may be considered a late fruit of the *querelle des anciens et des modernes*, the literary controversy that arose in the late seventeenth century around the question of whether or not ancient models were unsurpassable, or just an indispensable source of inspiration for modern man to do even better.[13] The model character of the "classical" age was out of the question on both sides of the *querelle*'s aisle. Thus, building a new Europe that could finally equal the taste, skills, and mechanics of the "Antients" was inseparable from the appropriation of the latter's artistic heritage to be found (and "secured" to finish up in European academies, collections, and museums) around the Mediterranean Sea. The theft of antiquities was entirely legitimized and nobilitated by the missionary fervor of saving "our" relics from the muddy hands of the ignorant fellahin and other folks who at the time inhabited the now-decayed lands of classical ideal, beauty, and wisdom. On his voyage of the mid 1630s, Sir Henry Blount declared that "Egypt is held to have beene the fountaine of all Science, and Arts civill, therefore I did hope to finde some sparke of those cinders not yet put out."[14] This was not just another variant of modern European anxiety regarding the loss of these ruins, that dialect, those fairy tales, those other landscapes, symbols of authenticity, naturality, and geniality menaced by oblivion that deserved to be saved before it was too late. Nor was it just a variant of the ordinary European hubris of

11 de La Porte, *Reisen eines Franzosen,* 309.

12 John Breval, *Remarks on several parts of Europe, relating chiefly to their antiquities and history, collected upon the spot in several tours since the year 1723*, vol. 1 (Lintot, 1738), 38.

13 Marc Fumaroli, *La Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes* (Gallimard, 2001).

14 Blount, *A Voyage into the Levant*, 3.

knowing better. It was all this as well, but in the given circumstances it was first of all a claim for moral and intellectual leverage over objects located in the lands of other rulers and people.

How in the world could the inhabitants of those places have lost their awareness of the past glory, notwithstanding the remains of the fallen age were still under their eyes? In the description by European observers, one culprit was Ottoman rule, which could stand for a specifically Turkish rule that had infiltrated the Mediterranean coast and islands from inner Asia, or more generally for Muslim rule. At the sight of Alexandria, Dumont noticed in 1690 that the "famous City of Alexandria, admir'd in former Ages for its Extent and Beauty, is now a wretched heap of Cottages, that seem to have been built on purpose to insult over the deplorable fate of the Ruins on which they are founded." He asserted that "the whole City is as it were buri'd under the Ruins of overturn'd Palaces; and 'tis impossible to behold that magnificent Rubbish, without reflecting with a certain Melancholic Pleasure on the ancient Splendour of these celebrated Structures."[15] It appears that Dumont, like several other European visitors, took the Mameluke fortifications erroneously for archaeological remains of Alexander the Great's foundation.[16] They were perhaps too impressed to consider it a product of "barbarian" architects and masons.

Even less prejudiced travelers like Niebuhr wrote of Alexandria that the "best piece of antiquity, however, could not be removed by the Mohammedans. This is the obelisk of Cleopatra. It is made of hard red granite and consists of one piece. Some letters from the Pharaonic inscription are still one inch deep. From this we can see how carefully the Egyptians operated, to conserve their message for eternity. It is not their fault that their descendants are no longer able to read them." He then mentioned the church of Saint Athanasius, the interior of which was said to be magnificent, containing too an ancient Greek library, but it had been converted into a mosque and was therefore forbidden for Christian visitors. "Apart from the above, nothing is worth seeing in the city of Alexandria. Everything is weird and dirty," he wrote.[17]

Preserving the "cultural heritage" of ancient Egypt was also entirely a European task in Niebuhr's mind. In Cairo, he wondered whether the pyramids were covered with marble. To find out, he climbed one pyramid up to the top, "which probably no European has done before me. I found the roof smooth, but not marble, and damaged in many places. From this one can

15 Dumont, *A New Voyage*, 201.

16 According to Campbell, *The travels of Edward Brown*, vol. 2, 7.

17 Niebuhr, *Entdeckungen im Orient*, 17.

conclude that the pyramids will one day become completely dilapidated." Despite complaining about the loss of what had been "removed by the Mohammedans," he had not the slightest difficulty in admitting that "with great effort I succeeded in acquiring in Kahira some [antique] precocities, which I immediately sent to Denmark."[18] On the contrary, it was a point of pride as in Denmark they would finally be "safe" (Figure 3.1). According to the European logic, this was not a removal.

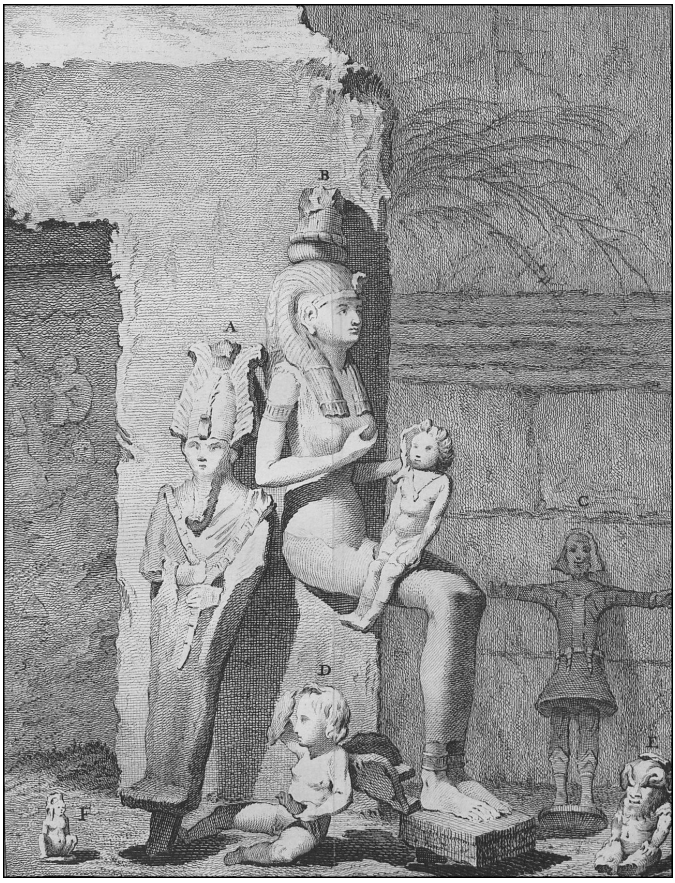


FIGURE 3.1 Reproduction of "some small figures brought back from Egypt" by Carsten Niebuhr in the 1760s. Niebuhr, *Reisebeschreibung nach Arabien und anderen umliegenden Ländern* (1774). Heidelberger historische Bestände digital, Creative Commons, Public Domain

18 Niebuhr, *Entdeckungen im Orient*, 36, 38.

Not only the "Mohammedans" themselves, but Churchmen bigotry was also in the dock under the severe scrutiny of the early modern traveler-"judges," especially, but not only, Protestant ones, and all those who were looking back at Catholic Church history and what it had done to erase the classical heritage. But of course, no less responsible were the Byzantine "schismatic" churchmen, culpable of having vilified and already largely rooted out Greek pagan greatness among the Greeks themselves even before the "Mohammedans" could arrive to finish the destruction.[19] In a remark in the preface to his book, Breval offered an interesting historical periodization for the process of oblivion and recuperation of the classical achievements in the very homelands of antiquity; "the Mist of the monkish Ignorance – he wrote – was not, however, intirely dispers'd till about the middle of the Fifteenth Century."[20] It was in the mid fifteenth century, at the height of the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople, that Humanist Church leaders such as Nicholas of Cues and Enea Piccolomini began to restore "Europe" from oblivion to make it the core of a new geopolitical project. The rediscovery of the classical past was essential to that project.

Thus, the shores of the Mediterranean Sea acquired central relevance indeed. Southern Italy was "rediscovered" as the former Magna Grecia thanks to a new archaeological and artistic interest in its *thesaurus antiquitatum et historiarum*.[21] It has to be said that, if the Spanish viceroys were suspected by British observers (of all observers!) like Joseph Addison of exporting all valuable Italian antiquities to Spain, after the foundation of the Bourbon Kingdom these same antiquities would become part of urban and royal self-representation.[22] From the seventeenth century, Sicily was "considered more than a rest during the trips to Malta; it was again discovered and renowned on a European scale." And the view of the visitor began to immerse the relics of the classical past into the present landscape. So, "the English Dryden in 1701 who, coming from Malta, stopped in Sicily and visited the island, also described the western and northern coast. He did not limit himself to Girgenti and Selinunte but defined the Conca d'Oro near Palermo as 'one of the most beautiful and rich valleys in the world'."[23] Sicily at the time had not yet been

19 On Venetian "rescue" efforts of Greek antiquities, jeopardized by the ignorant modern Greeks, see Stouraiti, *War, Communication, and the Politics of Culture*, 205.

20 Breval, *Remarks on several parts of Europe*, x.

21 Arnaldo Momigliano, "La riscoperta della Sicilia antica da T. Fazello a P. Orsi," *Studi urbinati di storia, filosofia e letteratura*, Serie B, 52, no. 1–2 (1978): 5–23.

22 Eloisa Dodero, *Ancient Marbles in Naples in the Eighteenth Century* (Brill, 2019), 8–23.

23 Gerd van de Moetter, "Confini fra Nord e Sud: Viaggiatori europei a Malta e in Sicilia nel XVII e XVIII secolo," *Bollettino del Centro Interuniversitario di Ricerche sul Viaggio in Italia* 10, no. 2 (1989): 345–46.

downgraded to an example of misery and backwardness, as it would be over the next hundred or hundred and fifty years. On the contrary, it enjoyed the fame of an ideal place. Among the "several islands of the Mediterranean Sea [it] was always considered to be the noblest, best and greatest," wrote David Funck in a travelogue published at Nuremberg in the late seventeenth century, continuing that the island, "because of its extraordinary fertility, can be called the rich Sicily, as everything that man can wish for out of necessity or delight can be obtained there abundantly."[24]

Every now and then, the gaze of the European traveler-philosophers began to be distracted from temple ruins and statues by the surrounding rural scenery and, sometimes, urban landscapes that already incorporated layers of intentional or unintentional classical reminiscence and historization. In hindsight, these experiences may be understood as the initial strokes in the picture of a "typically Mediterranean landscape" that was forming in the European mind.

Religious "Homecoming"

The new master narrative of history suggested to educated European philosopher-travelers that visiting the ruins of the classical age was for Europeans a kind of "homecoming." A similar effect exerted even on a less educated sailor or trader, who did not know classical Greek or Latin but the Catechism, the real or imagined places of the Biblical narration. This was all the more the case as the life and deeds of Jesus and most of his apostles were bereft of a physical spatial reference in Europe, a circumstance that only exalted the importance of the Holy Land's and the Levant's topography for Europe's Christian collective memory and self-representation.[25] The sacral aura of similar places as well as the mere imagination thereof elicited easily nostalgic feelings and a sense of belonging. Sometimes the eagerness for such an experience led, however, to gross geographical misconceptions: "Wee then saw Mount Ararat, whereon Noah's arke rested, plaine from att least 10 leagues to the westward of the east point of Cyprus," wrote Digby in his 1628 journal, before he or someone else later would add a note of correction.[26]

24 David Funck, *Leß-würdige Beschreibung Der hiebevor sehr schönen, mächtig und uralten Mittelländischen Meer-Insul Oder Hispanischen Königreichs Siciliä* (Funck, 1693), 10.

25 Maurice Halbwachs, *La topographie légendaire des Évangiles en Terre Sainte: étude de mémoire collective* (Presses universitaires de France, 1941), 161.

26 Digby, *Journal of a Voyage*, 37.

During the late seventeenth century and the eighteenth century, European missionary activity, trade, and pilgrimage returned to the Holy Land after the setback of 1516, as the Ottoman authorities, although suspicious regarding the intentions of European travelers, admitted pilgrimages, who were also a welcome source of revenue. Yet Ottoman suspicions were not completely mistaken, as European fantasies of reappropriation of sacred places were indeed blooming vis-à-vis the unsettling idea that "the Turkish unbelievers have grabbed the best Christian places."[27] But the old crusader fervor the authorities were probably looking for when subjecting European pilgrims to scrutiny had mostly faded away. This did not mean that the desire for reappropriation was extinct. For the moment, however, not warriors and knights but unarmed monks, missionaries, traders, explorers, and "large donations from Europe flow[ed] into Palestine."[28]

Carsten Niebuhr was one of the observers capable of describing what happened in the Holy Land with a more neutral tone that at times morphed into irony. In Ramallah he "was immediately told that the Arabs were robbers and barbarians, who assaulted and beat pilgrims wherever possible. (…) I had not realized in other regions that the Arabs were very cruel. Therefore, I did not quite believe that they behaved so inhumanely here, but I was ashamed to contradict. Later, I learned that the monks plant such horror stories to get as many donations as possible." In Jerusalem he noticed how Muslims detested Church music and other imported customs, which they nevertheless tolerated. "If Jerusalem were still in the hands of Christians, they would scarcely allow the Muslims to publicly hold their services. The Mohammedans are not that strict. They even allow Christians and Jews to go to Jerusalem for pilgrimages." At such a nodal point of interreligious tourism, maintaining public order was a demanding task for the Janissaries, not least because it was "too often the case that pilgrims clobber each other at the Tomb of Christ," offering to the flabbergasted local onlookers an extra lesson in European confessional tolerance. At any rate, maintaining public safety had its cost and the Danish–German explorer found it entirely "justified that Christians should pay substantial tribute to the Mohammedans for the freedom they enjoy here."[29]

Niebuhr also referred to the attention that European pilgrims dedicated to the fact of whether the holy monuments were located "exactly" where certain episodes narrated in the Holy Scriptures had occurred. The Muslims "are

27 Jacques de Bourges, *Wahrhaffte und eigendliche Erzehlung*, 39.

28 Niebuhr, *Entdeckungen im Orient*, 220.

29 Niebuhr, *Entdeckungen im Orient*, 215, 219–20.

amused when Christians claim that it is on a certain spot that this or that important event took place, and not a hundred steps further south or a hundred steps further north."[30] As Maurice Halbwachs has highlighted, European travelers to the Holy Land directed their attention "to concrete details and physical accidents, in order to place the events that [Christian memory] sought to situate there," as the "essential truth of Christianity" was in their mind correlated with the proven authenticity of places.[31] If such an interest in spatial objects related to religious belief had been detected for centuries, in the period under scrutiny the claims of knowing better about these objects than even the inhabitants thanks to European science and wisdom assumed additional traits of enlightened reappropriation of "unduly lost" places.

The Protestant merchant class present in Ottoman lands also sought to draw legitimacy from religion, seen as an indispensable "Business of the Soul" that obliged everyone "to serve its superior Ends and Purposes."[32] This at least was an admonition uttered by Thomas Owen, a Levant-Company-appointed chaplain based in Aleppo before the members of the Honourable Company of Merchants in the Levant. In the early eighteenth century, religious, commercial, and archaeological ambitions still represented only occasionally connected stances, and not yet a completely developed colonial project. Yet in hindsight we may say that the ingredients of such a project were maturing, albeit separately.

Plurality: A Staggering Trait of "Oriental" Otherness

To most European travelers to North Africa, the Levant, and the Holy Land, the plurality of "nations" and confessions that peacefully coexisted in one territory under the same rulers was stunning. They had to come to terms with the observation that "in the dominions of Islam" the severe religious, social, and linguistic segmentation they were used to did not exist.[33] During his journey of the early 1570s, Rauwolf observed:

30 Niebuhr, *Entdeckungen im Orient*, 220.

31 Halbwachs, *La topographie légendaire*, 1–2, 130.

32 Thomas Owen, *A sermon preach'd before the Honourable Company of Merchants trading to the Levant-Seas* (Ralph Smith, 1706), 9; Andrew John Lake, *The First Protestants in the Arab World: The Contribution to Christian Mission of the English Aleppo Chaplains, 1597–1782* (n.n., 2015), 82, accessed February 13, 2021, http://www.levantineheritage.com/pdf/The_First_Protestants_in_the_Arab_World.pdf.

33 Matar, *Europe Through Arab Eyes*, 116.

> Among the eastern Christians, we also find them that are called Surians, whereof there are a great many, but chiefly in Syria. They have like unto the Jews in several towns their peculiar churches. (…) In their religion they follow for the greatest part the Greeks; and administer the Sacrament in leavened bread; and they say their masses like unto them in the vulgar Arabian tongue. (…) They are subject unto the Turks, who make use of them as labourers both by water and land. They also mind their trade more than their religion; wherefore having lived so long among the Turks, they have already assumed their customs and manners in temporal and spiritual affairs.[34]

Henry Blount claimed that on his travels of the 1630s he had wanted to acquaint himself "with those other sects which live under the Turkes, as Greeks, Armenians, Freinks and Zinganaes, but especially the Iewes; a race from all so averse both in nature and institution, all glorying to single it selfe out of the rest of mankinde, remains obstinate, contemptible and famous."[35] While Giovanni Mariti would claim more than a century later that "two kinds of Jews are found in Syria and Palestine, one of which are originally from these countries, and the other foreigners," a contemporary of Blount's, George Sandys, observed of the Holy Land that it was "for the most part now inhabited by Moors, and Arabians: those possessing the vallies, and these the mountaines. Turkes there be few: but many Greeks, with other Christians, of all sects and nations; such as impute to the place an adherent holinesse. Here be also some Iewes, yet inherit they no part of the land; but in their own country do live as aliens. A people scattered throughout the whole world, and hated by those amongst whom they live; yet suffered, as a necessary mischief, subject to all wrongs and contumelies, which they support with an invincible patience."[36] As the son of an Anglican archbishop, Sandys interpreted what he saw through the lenses of the holy scriptures, especially when it came to the interpretation of the Jewish diaspora. During his 1692 journey, Dumont expressed another type of prejudice, one that at the time, with the Spanish situation in the background, was probably easier to find in a Catholic context: "The Levantine Jews are extremely Cunning and Deceitful, and so dexterous in the Art of Wheedling, that those who deal with 'em ought to be always upon their Guard. Cheating is the Trade by which they live, as others do by Labour or Traffick."[37]

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34 Rauwolf, "Travels," 290.

35 Blount, *A Voyage into the Levant*, 2.

36 Mariti, *Travels*, vol. 2, 77; Sandys, *A relation of a iourney*, 146.

37 Dumont, *A New Voyage*, 299.

The otherness, even of Christians, especially those different even from the more familiar Greek or Armenian Orthodox rites, was of particular interest. In "the country of Syria, called Phonicia, which reached along the sea-shore to Berinthus, Sidon, Tyrus and Acon, as far as the mountain of Carmelus," Rauwolf met "with many Arabians, Syrians, Jacobites, &c. Christians and Heathens" who all spoke "the Arabian tongue, which is the common one there to the whole country." On the basis of the common language a broad understanding and even political cohesion was possible, for example between "the Maronites and Trusci their neighbours and allies,"[38] that is, between a Christian sect and a community of Shiite Muslim origins. It is not clear to whom he attributed the designation of heathens, perhaps the Yazidis and their monotheistic yet not Abrahamic religion, in case he encountered some of them living distant from the main settlement areas of this Kurdish-speaking community. De La Porte said of these areas that "the Curdistan landscape is partly occupied by inhabitants whose origins are very old but little known. They are called Yessides." He did not forget to say that they were "naturally inclined to rob and steal." For him, they were not even heathens, an inexplicable condition of a-religiosity that perhaps could be explained only by an utter subhuman stupidity: "Their women are ugly, but courageous, strong and wild. The men are brave, proud and cruel. They are neither Christians nor Jews, neither Mohammedans nor heathen: in vain you'd look for rougher and sillier people in all of Asia."[39]

The Earl of Sandwich noted that "the inhabitants of Ægypt are, for the most part, Coptes and Arabs, the former of which are the descendants of the ancient Ægyptians. They pretend to be the first people of Africa who received the light of Christianity, which was preached to them by St Mark." He recalled their long history of martyrdom: "Their obstinate attachment to their religion has been the cause of many disasters that they have laboured under; having been subject to continual persecutions and massacres, both in the time of the Pagans, the government of the Greek emperors and that of the Mahometans."[40] Reliable information about Ethiopia was rare, the empire lying "above Egypt," as the Portuguese Jesuit missionary Jerónymo Lobo, who had traveled and lived there in the seventeenth century, witnessed. In his report, translated and reprinted in the eighteenth century, he described various aspects and customs of "Moors" and "pagans" who were also subject to the emperor, without detailing in his report the specifics of the Christian beliefs and liturgical practices of

38 Rauwolf, "Travels," 15, 31, 198.

39 de La Porte, *Reisen eines Franzosen*, 409–10.

40 Montague Sandwich, *A voyage*, 478–79.

the place. Instead, he attributed importance to another detail regarding the emperors who over so "many ages" ruled over "the most easterly" and most ancient and largest "of those many kingdoms and provinces into which Africa is divided." He underlined that, no, the emperor of Ethiopia was not the legendary "Prester John," contrary to what so many "Franks" fantasized. Lobo explained the misconception with "Jan signifying King" in the native language and the fact that the emperor was considered a priest. The Abyssinians who "undertake pilgrimages to the holy land, which being not far remote" must have been misunderstood by Christians of other stretches whom they met there and who took "Jan" for "John."[41] However, Anton Friedrich Büsching, who was also an academic theologist, did not fail to underline that "in Abyssinia and in the Congo, there reigns a kind of Christianity that is very deformed and robbed of its natural purity."[42] What the natural purity of the Christian faith was, Luther of course knew better.

It is hard to deny that until the late eighteenth century the Mediterranean Sea in many discourses represented a boundary between Christianity and Islam instead of a united "world."[43] Yet this was not a black and white division but one of many shades of grey. And perhaps it had in fact more traits of a plurality than of a "division" that would suggest to contemporaries that there was a "lack" of unity that must be repaired. Rather, before a "unification" could be proposed, a geography of "division" had to be established in the European mind. If pure Christians were here, not just "Mohammedans" but also "deformed Christians" were there. This was another reason why religious distinction conveniently would be mixed with, and partially absorbed by, geographical division.

The travelogues made it abundantly clear that "Asia" and "Africa" were home to forms of Christianity, which no less than Muslim communities transcended familiar "civil" habits and customs, transmitting an otherness that indirectly exalted Latin-Germanic and Catholic-Protestant "Europeanness." Those "other" Christians underlined geographic differences between "our country," as Rauwolf had formulated, and "their country," also independently from religion. A side effect was that geographical divides even attenuated Muslim Otherness, the representation of which by traveler-philosophers was indeed much more sophisticated than the enraged propagandistic denigrations disseminated in times of war through journals, reports, caricatures,

41 Jerónymo Lobo, *A short relation of the River Nile: of its source and current* (Lackington, Allen & Co, 1798), 13, 52–53.

42 Büsching, *Nuova Geografia*, vol. 29, 10.

43 D'Auria, "Protean boundaries," 32–33.

poems, and novels. On similar occasions, old crusade motifs and the Malta Knights' "maritime triumphs" were recalled, while in narrative fiction "Muslim sensuality, unrestrained emotion, barbaric cruelty, and moral corruption were constitutive motifs (…) that affirmed and sustained popular stereotypes about the Ottomans."[44] Similar stereotypes were not just orientalist but identical to those that Europe's philosophical and colonial mind attributed to all "barbarians" and "savages" out there. European war propaganda sometimes equated Muslims even to Heathens to render the hiatus between Us and the Other unbridgeable.

Travelogues usually did not go that far, although travelers' perceptions were to varying degrees pre-shaped by theological and philosophical literature appearing on Islam and the "Orient" in their home countries. Particularly at Protestant universities, numerous scholars had turned their attention to the languages, history, and religions of the Orient since the seventeenth century. In doing so, they often highlighted theological "flaws" of Islam, such as moral laxity and irrational beliefs, which the Reformation had also accused the Catholic Church of.[45] However, when our travelers intended to denigrate "the Other," they mostly preferred to highlight the supposed divide between "civility" and "savagery" over inherently religious or theological aspects.[46] The differences related to the latter apparently were taken for granted, as was on the other hand the common Abrahamic descent. This allowed the educated traveler also to recognize a number of commonalities. On the whole, while disparaging and generalizing judgments to the detriment of religious groups or tribal communities were all but absent, they mostly referred to their customs and habits rather than their beliefs.

Consequently, "the Other" was not so often "the Mohammedan," a distinction that served to roughly structure observations regarding a confessionally pluralistic reality like that of most Ottoman lands. Rather, it was "the Turk," "the Moore," "the Arab," and so on who also stood for a plurality of possible contextual meanings each. Among these possible meanings, there was certainly also a generalizing reference to Islam, even if the traveler to the Levant would learn, for example, that Arabic, the language of *al-Qur'ān*, was also the language of the Bible for local Christian communities, and that "Arabic is the natural language of Bethlehem."[47] Typical of the language and intellectual

44 Stouraiti, *War, Communication, and the Politics of Culture*, 166, 169.

45 Karabela, *Islamic Thought Through Protestant Eyes*, 3–30.

46 Anna Chiarloni, "Goethe und der Islam. Formen eines Zusammentreffens," in *Deutsche Kultur und Islam am Mittelmeer*, ed. Laura Auteri and Margherita Cottone (Kümmerle Verlag, 2005), 237.

47 Mariti, *Travels*, vol. 2, 415.

disposition of a good number of traveler-philosophers was probably the declaration by the English Henry Blount who visited the Levant in the early decades of the seventeenth century. He declared that

> my generall purpose [was] (…) to observe the Religion, Manners and Policie of the Turkes, not perfectly (which were a taske for an inhabitant rather then [sic] a passenger,) but so farre forth, as might satisfie this scruple, (to wit) whether to an unpartiall conceit, the Turkish way appeare absolutely barbarous, as we are given to understand, or rather an other kinde of civilitie, different from ours, but no lesse pretending.[48]

In short, especially travelers from Protestant countries, and later those influenced by Enlightenment geography and anthropology, were not ready to buy in to religiously fervent black and white verdicts. Some, and Blount was among them, were even prepared to keep the civility-barbarianism taxonomy open, in a sort of "diversity approach" that was not only intellectually more flexible but also made power politics better adaptable to the specific needs of any situation.

So, the Mediterranean Sea was a moat between Christendom and Islam only in a generic sense. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the awareness grew that this was a stark abstraction from the many commonalities derived from history and the concrete complexities of real life and exchange. Historiography has long since insisted how intertwined the supposed "two" shores of the Mediterranean were throughout their historical development.[49] If there was a moat in the Western mind, it slowly but relentlessly shifted away from religious definitions toward a "Europe" versus "Orient" divide, although the traces of religious assessments of the "Other"—and the differences that persisted, for example, between Protestant and Catholic Orientalist schools—remained visible even in its most secularized descriptions.

Both aspects—the general contrast between "Europe" and the "Orient" as well as the confessional bias of direct observation—appear evident in the

48 Blount, *A Voyage*, 1, 2.

49 Gerhard Endreß, "Der Islam und die Einheit des mediterranen Kulturraums im Mittelalter," in *Das Mittelmeer: die Wiege der europäischen Kultur*, ed. Klaus Rosen (Bouvier, 1998), 270–95; Laura Auteri, "Bilder von Arabern und Türken im 16. Jahrhundert," Margherita Cottone, "Das Islam-Bild zur Zeit der Aufklärung in Europa," and Lucia Mor, "Bilder des islamischen Ägypten," in *Deutsche Kultur und Islam am Mittelmeer*, ed. Laura Auteri and Margherita Cottone (Kümmerle Verlag, 2005), 141–57, 197–213, and 215–36 respectively.

descriptions published by Carsten Niebuhr and the Florentine Giovanni Mariti. The latter sojourned in the Levant—Cyprus, Syria and Palestine—from 1760 to 1768, almost during the same years when Niebuhr, between 1761 and 1767, was traveling "the Orient" on behalf of the Danish king. Moreover, Niebuhr met Mariti personally in Cyprus, where the latter was introduced to him as the secretary of the British Consulate.[50] It was a brief, occasional meeting of two "European" men driven by the common ideals of Humanism and Enlightenment, critical towards the maleficence and corruption of the Turkish government but ready to see nuances and differences and stick to the "truth" of their observations.

In the same vein, Niebuhr made several differentiating observations of "peoples," "nations," sects, and languages that composed the multifaceted panorama of the Levant. "Sometimes I came across wells where girls of Kurdish nomads watered the cattle," he wrote, continuing that "these girls had not covered their face, they were well-grown, sunburnt beauties." He also noticed that the "ancient Syrian language has long been superseded by the Arabic. However, there seem to exist a few villages in the governorate of Damascus where Syrian is still spoken." He added that the "Maronites recognize the Pope as head of the Church" but pointed out that the Maronite Collegium of Rome was depopulated most of the time, as parents feared "that their children might embrace European customs. Moreover, a Maronite would have to starve to death in his homeland with what he learned in Europe." Finally, he deconstructed another myth, according to which the Druses were descendants of French crusaders. No, they were not, Niebuhr clarified, but instead they "were probably originally Syrians." Such clarifications served to mark a difference between Europe and "the Orient" beyond religion.[51]

And when it came to Islam, the most interesting aspect for Niebuhr was again pointing out differences, for example when maintaining that the "shiites do not pray as devoutly as the Sunnis. (…) When washing themselves, however, they are accurate."[52] Similarly, Mariti pointed out that the Arabs "very seldom agree with the Turks, which fully proves that being of the same religion is not a sufficient bond to bind men together. Too proud of the high nobility that they ascribe to themselves, they consider the Turks as bastards, and as the usurpers of their natural heritage." Along the same line of distinctions, but probably differing from Niebuhr in the result of his observation, he noticed that the two kinds of Jews he had found in Syria and Palestine were also dis-

50 Niebuhr, *Entdeckungen im Orient*, 205.
51 Niebuhr, *Entdeckungen im Orient*, 176–81.
52 Niebuhr, *Entdeckungen im Orient*, 187.

tinguished by being the ones "Talmudists, and Caraites" the other, the latter protagonists of an "inveterate hatred" against "the rest of their brethren."[53] This observation may stem from the Catholic background that shaped Mariti despite his Enlightenment leanings, while contemporary Protestant theologians generally had greater sympathy for the Karaites than for Rabbinic Judaism (as well as for Shiites over Sunnis). In their own perception, these groups, like Protestants (and unlike Catholicism), sought the purest possible exegesis of original scriptures, rejecting reliance on tradition.[54]

Mariti also argued that it was devoid of historical fact to think that the Druses descended from a French crusader family named Dreux, yet he conceded that they "are fond of the Europeans" and in the context of their European sympathies he mentioned that they "have a very great aversion to usury, they cannot endure the roguery of the Turks and the avarice of the Hebrews."[55] They were unnerved by the typical traits of the Orient, was the implicit suggestion, so their European sympathies could be well explained. Mariti, as the enlightened advocate of religious tolerance that he was, when visiting Mount Carmel, noted how "two priests, and two Carmelite laics, are almost always here at prayers. The little leisure that they allow themselves is employed in cultivating a small garden contiguous to the monastery. These monks live on the charity of the Mahometans, who have often been witnesses to their exemplary life."[56] Was this not a wonderful example of tolerance and human understanding? Yes, it was, but perhaps it was even more a document of morals, beliefs, customs, and attitudes that were neither Christian nor Jewish and not even Muslim but "Oriental." This latter interpretation is made even more plausible by another of Mariti's accounts of Mount Carmel:

> You then enter a field called the Field of Cucumbers; thus named, because it contains a great number of round stones, the interior part of which, consisting of a starry substance, has a great resemblance to the pulp of a cucumber. Oriental superstition considers this *lusus naturæ* as occasioned by a malediction of the prophet Elijah; who, not being able to obtain from the proprietor one of these cucumbers to refresh him, ordered them to be changed into stones. The European philosopher, who laughs at this fable, perceives here nothing strange

53 Mariti, *Travels*, vol. 2, 3, 77.
54 Karabela, *Islamic Thought Through Protestant Eyes*, 13, 28–29.
55 Mariti, *Travels*, vol. 2, 27, 30.
56 Mariti, *Travels*, vol. 2, 133–34.

> or uncommon. Abundance of the same kind of stones may be found in all mountains of Syria.[57]

And of course, those superstitious Orientals seemed to have not the slightest idea of which treasure of history and civility they were sitting on, immersed as they were in the prayers and fieldworks of their monotonous life bereft of worldly purpose:

> An European architect would have regretted more than I, to see most beautiful columns of oriental granite lying neglected, while they might no doubt be employed for the noblest purposes. Since ignorance and barbarity have succeeded the ages of architecture and fine taste, such columns, covered with rubbish or buried under ruins, may be found in all Syria.[58]

Even more varied appear the perceptions related to the Ottomans as a political factor, and to "the Turks." Seen from afar, say from an Italian port city, the latter denomination was sometimes a vague indication for all subjects of that empire, other times for its Muslim subjects only, with no clear distinction necessarily made between "Turks," "Saracens," "Moors," "Mohammedans," and other names. For European travelers "into the Orient" it was more often a name for distinguishing the ruling group and imperial officials who spoke and wrote their documents in Turkish, from native inhabitants such as "Greeks," "Arabs," "Moors," etc., even if the "Turkish" officials often also had linguistically, confessionally or regionally diversified backgrounds.

"The Ottomans, as an element of the historiography of early modern Europe," Palmira Brummett writes, "often appear in two standard forms: the 'empire', a continent-spanning but rather amorphous imperial entity as a military great power, and the 'Turks', an embodied plurality that 'threatened Christendom' but was ultimately domesticated, exoticized and dominated by an ascendant Europe as the early modern era came to an end." This latter representation is due to the fact that historiography usually reorganizes the past in hindsight, making the events flow toward a known outcome. This is what we are doing in the present chapter as well. Nevertheless, we also try to acknowledge that in the process that spanned from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, "there was no definitive border between Europe and Asia, or Islam and Christendom"—not least in everyday life experience, even if the latter dichotomy had been all but unknown by the political and religious rhet-

57 Mariti, *Travels*, vol. 2, 138.
58 Mariti, *Travels*, vol. 2, 141.

oric since the Middle Ages whereas "Europe," which had been almost absent from the lexicon for about a millennium, was only now infiltrating the narration. However, hindsight unavoidably filters perception attracting our particular attention to words, such as "Europe," that for contemporaries of those past presents were not necessarily more important than others. For their everyday experience therefore holds "a rather more complex picture, one that included permeable borders, overlapping interests and shared societies."[59] On the other hand, this very "complexity" is no less a byproduct of our own hindsight, as it refers to present distinctions that contemporaries often did not even consider or were not aware of. It could hardly be otherwise.

So, no wonder that when we read through European travelogues, we find the descriptions of "the Turk" drifting back and forth between admiration and repugnance, approval and condemnation or harsh criticism. From his journey of 1735–36, de La Porte took home the following impression:

> What I have most admired in the whole of Turkey is the fact that one does not see begging or other humble people in the streets, as in France. The active compassion for the poor, which is commanded in the Alcoran as it is in the Gospel, is a more general virtue among the Mahomedans than among the Christians. Except for private alms, nothing is more common than spending considerable sums from public foundations to improve ways, build wells and bridges for the convenience of the people, set up hospitals, hostels for foreigners, baths and mosques.[60]

By contrast, Dumont wrote in the late seventeenth century that the Turks were

> so extremely careless of the Management of Publick Affairs, that their Streets are not so much as pav'd; and I'm apt to think there wou'd not be a Fountain in their Cities, nor a Bridge on their Rivers, if some dying Persons did not bequeath Legacies to be employ'd in erecting such useful Works. The ill Posture of Affairs in this Country is a Naturall Consequence of the Constitution of the Government; for what there are not incorporate Societies, Town-Houses, Sheriffs or Burgo-masters.[61]

59 Palmira Brummett, *Mapping the Ottomans: Sovereignty, Territory, and Identity in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Cambridge University Press, 2020), 3–4.

60 De La Porte, *Reisen eines Franzosen,* 397.

61 Dumont, *A New Voyage to the Levant*, 308.

By measuring Turkey with his European yardstick and inserting the differences into his own categories of "good governance," Dumont prompted what we later would call the progress-backwardness scheme, already in use among colonizers, to be applied to the "the Turks." Some decades earlier, under the fresh impression of defeat in the war of Candia, the Venetian Girolamo Brusoni summarized the ambiguity of judgment by writing that "the Turks made it known to be those incurable animals of Barbarians who, although they sometimes appear to be tame and pleasant, suddenly resume their ferocity."[62] Thus, their value, as the value of all humans, was to be measured by degrees of "civility" against "barbarianism," according to what the philosophers of contract theory had already established. Here, again, we see how a new parameter for value judgments regarding countries and people had entered the Mediterranean: history—or what it meant according to the new European philosophy and "science" thereof.

2 Rocking the Cradle of Civilization

For much of the time when they were not engaged in open conflict, the Republic of Venice and the Ottoman Empire maintained diplomatic relations based on mutual economic benefit and reciprocal recognition of strategic interests and sovereign authority. This is not to say that religion played no role in their relations—on the contrary, especially during wartime, the rhetoric of Christendom versus the "infidels" dominated political and propagandistic discourse. At other times, when, for example, Venice helped in transferring Morisco and Sephardim refugees to the Ottoman countries, it tacitly marked its distance from the Spanish Inquisition. And even if much to the Venetian regret the Sultan seemed to grant the speakership for Catholic Christians under Ottoman rule to the French, Venetian ambassadors did not renounce petitioning the Sublime Porte to intervene in the "dispute between the Catholic and Orthodox monks regarding the rights of control of the Holy Sites in Jerusalem" or in favor of Catholics who were "harassed by clergy from the Greek Orthodox Church and even common Ottoman subjects who were Greek Orthodox" in all sorts of religious disputes.[63]

At the same time, concerning "civility"—a concept well assimilated into Venetian discourse—both "the Turk" and "the Greek" occupied an ambiguous position, an aspect that highlights the role of the Venetian Republic (and other

62 Brusoni, *Historia dell'ultima guerra*, 238.

63 Zahirović, *The Register*, xviii, 109–11.

Italian states) in the construction of "Europe." How were the Venetians seen by the British, French, and other North-West Europeans when they began to attribute degrees of "civility" to the people living around the Mediterranean Sea? At the time, the transitive verb "to civilize" had already been derived from "civility," whereas the noun "civilization" had still to be invented. In the mid eighteenth century, John Campbell made his fictional traveler Edward Brown observe that

> the Subjects of the State of Venice, and other Italians, manage their Affairs more to their own Profit, and much to their Credit, than the other Merchants who live [in Egypt]. (…) Of this I conceive the chief Reason to be that Sobriety so natural to the Natives of Italy, Vigilance, Penetration and Civility; for all these Qualities they possess in a supreme Degree (…) To say the Truth, we have borrowed from the Italians all that we know of Trade, as our Books of Account testify, and the Terms made use of by the Merchants of England, Germany and Holland. It would be well if we could borrow also when we go abroad their Manners and their Virtues.[64]

This passage shows how Italians, and perhaps Genoese, Tuscans, and Venetians in particular, were perceived as part of a European "We" group. Their recognition was based on common Catholic-Protestant and Latin-Germanic backgrounds, the shared intellectual and philosophical traditions of Humanism, Renaissance, and rationalist Enlightenment thinking, as well as the pioneering role of Genoese, Tuscans, and other Italians in the context of the Iberian expansion toward the Atlantic and the distinctively capitalist character of their overseas systems of trade, mining, and plantation in which Italians, especially in the early phase, participated and stood out in both theory and practice. As Maria Fusaro observes, the "'commercial' nature of the Venetian empire attracted the attention of England from this early modern period, and contemporaries saw parallels with the budding English experience."[65]

This was long before the "Levantinization" hit "Byzantine" and "Arab" Southern Italy in the second half of the nineteenth century, even though on an intellectual level that process had already started earlier, for example through the Orientalizing of the eastern Roman Empire by Gibbon, who considered it a variant of Oriental despotism; and with statements such as Mariti's according to which the Italians adopted from the Arabs "their vindicative

64 Campbell, *The travels of Edward Brown*, vol. 2, 190–92.

65 Fusaro, *Political Economies of Empire*, 16.

spirit" as well as "this laudable custom of being hospitable to strangers."[66] But the quintessential Europeanness of the Venetians appeared to be questioned by hardly anyone, not least because their regional empire of overseas dominions exhibited many traits characteristic of early-modern European capitalism and colonialism.

"Civility Gaps" at the Root of Intra-Mediterranean Colonialism

In hindsight, the Venetian *Stato da Mar* can also be seen—at least in considerable part—as a prototype for later intra-Mediterranean colonial relationships, such as those between France and North Africa. Its Levantine overseas possessions functioned primarily as military and naval bases as well as transhipment and trading hubs for the Serenissima's commercial empire. They also served as sites for the exploitation of existing human and natural resources, notably through the introduction of land taxes and cash crops, such as currants. The former Byzantine territories were inhabited predominantly by Greeks. Within Venice itself, Greek inhabitants of lower social strata were treated as ordinary foreigners. But Greek aristocrats, merchants, shipowners, and shipbuilders enjoyed a remarkable degree of religious tolerance and social integration. This tolerance stemmed in part from a shared Byzantine heritage but more significantly from the recognition that their expertise and extensive networks were valuable to the metropolis, which sought to centralize the accumulation and distribution of colonial revenues.[67]

In the overseas possessions, centuries of Venetian administration, diplomacy, and commerce fostered a perception of "Greekness" and the "Levant" as inherently diverse when measured against Venetian norms. Religious differences were carefully documented and strategically instrumentalized whenever advantageous. As "the commodification of Greek territories was an essential component of Venetian colonial ideology," a Catholic sense of moral and spiritual superiority and the Venetian mercantile mind went indeed hand in hand.[68] Yet what Venetian colonial administrators emphasized most was a perceived divide in "civility," which became central to their construction of both Self and the colonized Other.

When they took over, in the major cities and trade hubs "the Venetians made a concerted effort to present their rule not as a mere military conquest over the Byzantines, but rather as a continuation of imperial Byzantine admin-

66 Mariti, *Travels*, vol. 2, 17.

67 Fusaro, *Political Economies of Empire*, 17–20, 236–40.

68 Stouraiti, *War, Communication, and the Politics of Culture*, 173.

istration."[69] Evidence suggests, however, that the guidelines of Venetian overseas administration were in tune with the general European colonial practices, such as the conquering and penetration of territory, the taking into possession of supposedly fallow "no-man's land" or *terra nullius* and transforming it into marketable arable and pastureland, the promotion of mining and other resources and their trade for economic exploitation. Other declared objectives were the extinction of supposedly anachronistic cultural relics and the pacification of quarrels among primitive irascible natives. Finally, great pride was injected into the introduction of rational principles of administration of which the natives, according to the Venetian officials, had never been capable by themselves.[70]

"Greeks" was a name for Greek speakers identifying themselves as such. At the same time, it was a confessional denomination for Orthodox Christian subjects of Ottoman or Venetian rule. While the latter were initially subjected to conversion attempts and continued to be viewed with some skepticism, the religious status of the former was not merely tolerated in the Ottoman Empire but represented the central mechanism of their integration into the empire. Within Ottoman territory, "Catholics were the foreign Christians, while the Orthodox Christians were distinguished – in their own eyes and in the eyes of others – by their submission to Muslim rule."[71] For the same reason, Greek Orthodox subjects of the Sultan were seen by many Catholic and Protestant travelers as "Orientals," almost implying that they might not be "real" Christians.

The "Oriental Greekness" perceived by "Franks" could also comprise Orthodox Christian speakers of Albanese, Slav, Romanian, Arabic, and other idioms. According to their degree of perceived "savagery" in Western eyes, the latter could also be degraded further, from the still more honorable "Greek" status, which was most easily associated with "more civil" coastland, town, or archipelago dwellers, into Slavs who, when they were lucky enough, had attributed "a sort of noble savagery"; or into Vlach or "Morlach Christian subjects of the

69 Maria Georgopoulou, *Venice's Mediterranean Colonies: Architecture and Urbanism* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), 10.

70 These aspects of Venice's colonial approach have been highlighted by Anastasia Stouraiti, for example in Petri and Stouraiti, "Raummetaphern der Rückständigkeit," 152–54. Among her references, see Pietro Donazzolo, *I viaggiatori veneti minori: Studio biobibliografico* (Reale Società Geografica, 1927), 6–7; Gino Benzoni, "Ranke's Favorite Source. The Venetian Relazioni," in *Leopold von Ranke and the Shaping of the Historical Discipline*, ed. by Georg G. Iggers and James M. Powell (Syracuse University Press, 1990), 45–57; Maria Fusaro, *Uva passa. Una guerra commerciale tra Venezia e l'Inghilterra (1540– 1640)* (il Cardo, 1999), 45, 52.

71 Greene, *Catholic Pirates and Greek Merchants*, 74.

Turk" if not into hajduks, klephts, and other ethnically or socially connotated hinterland and mountain figures.[72]

In Venetian documents, especially these latter, as well as Albanians, were often described as naïve indolent people who had to be helped to climb to a higher level of progress. Venetian officials repeatedly made mention of an "instinct for the comfortable life" and the natives' hostility toward "any strenuous work or activity that goes beyond the ordinary, as well as military service." They were "too easy to flare up and too difficult due to their poor upbringing and innate brutality."[73] In many reports the lack of social cohesion, sensible institutions and self-control as well as the constant struggle of all against all—supposed model cases for the Hobbesian "state of nature"—were contrasted with the civilizing and educational responsibility of a European empire for the good, like that of Venice.[74] The reality behind the Serenissima's complacent self-designation as a benevolent ruler was different. During the few decades of its rule over the Morea, it was the Venetian Republic itself that disrupted the social order by treating the Peloponnese as a colony "economically tied to resource extraction and subject to an administrative framework that ignored the legal tradition of the Orthodox Church. Venetian policies on land distribution, public service, and communal organization generated considerable civil unrest," especially among the lower social classes "burdened by heavy taxes and forced labour."[75]

Still at the end of the seventeenth century, in the eyes of other European observers the Serenissima held all the insignia of empire firmly in her hands. "After the charming View of Constantinople from the Sea of Marmora, I never beheld a finer prospect than that of Venice," wrote a mesmerized Dumont who professed to be a "ravish'd Spectator … of a great City springing out of the Water." Yet he did not forget to mention the repressive methods of securing power, for example by a great number of spies: "These Informers are a horrible Plague to those who are under the Dominion of this Republick, as well natural Venetians as Greeks. For the least Offence exposes a Man to the

72 The first quotation is from Larry Wolff, *Venice and the Slavs: The Discovery of Dalmatia in the Age of Enlightenment* (Stanford University Press, 2002), 2; the second, from Girolamo Brusoni, *Historia dell'ultima guerra tra veneziani e turchi* (Stefano Curti, 1673), 127.

73 *Le Relazioni dei Provveditori veneziani di Zante* (*XVI–XVIII sec.*), ed. Dimitris Arvanitakis (Istituto ellenico di studi bizantini e postbizantini, 2000), 406, 424.

74 Spiridon Lambros, "Εκθέσεις τών Βενετών προνοητών εκ τών εν Βενετία Αρχείων εκδιδόμενοι" [Testimonies of Venetian Thinkers from the Archives of Venice, published], *Δελτίον της ιστορικής και εθνολογικής εταιρείας της Ελλάδος* [Bulletin of the Historical and Ethnological Society of Greece] 5 (1900): 245, 264, 378, 456, 458 and 693; references reported by Anastasia Stourati, in Petri and Stouraiti, "Raummetaphern der Rückständigkeit," 154–55.

75 Stouraiti, *War, Communication and the Politics of Culture*, 96.

Severity of the Inquisition of the State, which is at least as terrible a Tribunal as that of Rome."[76]

Dumont's observation must not be read necessarily as a negative moral judgment. Far from him to see any "oriental despotism" at work here. Before the second half of the eighteenth century, in Western eyes the capacity of policing and harsh repression was not thoroughly classified as backwardness. The hypocrisy according to which one's own government's repression was "lawful," whereas that of "eastern despots" was not, was not grounded on the cruelty of government action as such but on its alleged good or bad purposes. Whenever repression was for the sake of "lawful" values, it happened to be interpreted as a rational and efficient form of modern legitimate power. Englishman Sir Henry Blount, in his early-seventeenth-century voyage across the Balkans, described the Turks as the "only moderne people" in the area, among other reasons because and not despite of the efficacy of their repression.[77] Apparently, his judgment was the expression of a new merchant-capitalist mentality on its way of morphing into a veritable political philosophy. According to that philosophy, protection of private property was the very essence of a commonwealth's civility, and the ultimate legitimization of statehood.[78] Founding texts of Western political philosophy would also explain how even a non-violent thief should be killed to punish the sacrilege of that utmost holy principle.[79] Therefore, Blount sincerely appreciated the cruelty of Ottoman law enforcement in an otherwise savage country inhabited by "many Mountainers, or Outlawes, like the wild Irish, who live upon spoyle." Even towns like Belgrade and Sofia, still resembling a glorious "Greek" past, had to be protected against the relapse into the same state of savage lawlessness that reigned over the surroundings. Fortunately, "thieves upon the way are empaled without delay, or mercy" and these measures of "speedy and remerceless severitie" used by the Ottoman rulers meant "that when their great Armies lye about any Towne, or passe, no man is endamaged, or troubled to secure his goods."[80]

It is also interesting to note Dumont's distinction between "natural Venetians" and "Greeks," and the apparent use of the latter as a sample name for "unnatural Venetians," that is, alien, overseas, or second-class subjects of the

76 Dumont, *A New Voyage*, 348, 351.

77 Blount, *A Voyage*, 2.

78 David Hume, "Of the Origin of Justice and Property" [1740], in David Hume, *Political Writings* (Hackett, 1994), 4–20.

79 John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* [1690] (Millar et al., 1765), 207–38; for a synthetic discussion, see James Tully, *An Approach to Political Philosophy: Locke in Contexts* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), 109–36.

80 Blount, *A Voyage*, 12–16.

Republic. Again, the meaning of "Greek" had multiple dimensions. Sandys wrote in 1621 that Constantinople was the "seate of the Roman Emperors, then of the Greeke, as now it is of the Turkish," whereas seen from the East that what Westerners would call the Byzantine Empire was the one and only Roman Empire according to the legitimacy of dynastic succession.[81] Along the lines of religious schism and political divide, the Latin-Germanic and Catholic image of the inhabitants of the "Greek Empire" had already been degraded over the centuries. Perhaps it needed the rise of the Ottomans and their conquest of Constantinople in 1453 to replace "Christendom" partially and gradually with "Europe" in the West and instrumentally readmit the formerly despised Greeks, as they were now "languishing under the Turkish yoke," to a theoretical status of Christian brethren: schismatic and not fully legitimate brethren, of course, but at least worthy of pity; and occasionally, a welcome pretext for "European military intervention in the Ottoman empire as a response to a plea for assistance by local Christians in need of salvation."[82]

As we have already mentioned when looking at travelers who were stealing antiquities without the least awareness of wrongdoing, Humanism and Renaissance pitted the late "Greek Empire" and its surviving Greek population under Ottoman or Venetian rule in a rather unfavorable way against the "ancient Greeks." Suzanne Saïd has shown how until the mid-eighteenth century finding "positive analogies between ancient and modern Greeks" was foreign to the majority of European travelers.[83] On the contrary, the modern Greeks were frequently denigrated as the most vivid negation of the classical model, and this not only because of Turkish oppression but also because of their own supposed faults. As Rauwolf wrote in 1582, "ancient Greeks in former days did exceed almost all other nations in wisdom and understanding, and used to have their children instructed at home in their own universities in all manner of learning; so in our times we find the contrary." Contemporary Greeks, he continued,

> take greater delight in idle discourses, and rather love idleness, which they have learned very well, since they truckle under the Turkish yoke. 'Tis true, they write the Greek language, but which is corrupt and different from the ancient, as the Italian is from Latin. The Turks despise them for their laziness and cowardice,

81 Sandys, *A relation of a iourney*, 19.

82 Stouraiti, *War, Communication, and the Politics of Culture*, 179.

83 Suzanne Saïd, "The Mirage of Greek Continuity: On the Uses and Abuses of Analogy in Some Travel Narratives from the Seventeenth to the Eighteenth Century," in *Rethinking the Mediterranean*, ed. William V. Harris (Oxford University Press, 2005), 270.

> and on the contrary they love the Germans, French and Italians and praise them, saying that they are stout and courageous soldiers; they call them all by the same name *Franci*, because the divisions of our country are unknown to most of them.[84]

The borders drawn on Rauwolf's mental map clearly separate the Levant or Turkish-dominated areas from "our country," the land of the Franks, that is, the Latin-Germanic, once exclusively Catholic, Europe, now split up by confessional division the underlying unity of which the Protestant Rauwolf nevertheless had no problems in recognizing. However fragmented, Western Catholic-Protestant Christendom, which was now becoming increasingly commonly identified with "Europe," in his perception confirmed its unitarian contour against the backdrop of the Levant, the Orient, Turkey, Islam, etc., and likewise against Eastern "schismatic" Christendom, which the Greeks were the main part of.[85] And, yes, that "Europe" had its religious roots in the Holy Land, its cultural ones in Greece and Egypt—all "countries once so glorious and famous for their happie estate," which had become, as Sandys pointed out, "the most deplored spectacles of extreme miserie: the wild beasts of mankind having broken upon them and rooted out all civilitie."[86]

Sandys's statement, made in the early seventeenth century, explains the deplorable savagery that had befallen the former civilized Greeks and sent a subtle message of duty and responsibility for Europeans, the only legitimate heirs of classic and Christian tradition. The same judgment was echoed still more than a hundred years later by Büsching, when he deplored the decay of Libya under Ottoman rule, whereas it had been so flourishing "under the industrious government and rule of Greek hands."[87] The comparison with the ancient Greeks was implicitly meant as a comparison with the modern "Europeans." Where the modern Greeks belonged, whether inside or outside "Europe," only began to be accepted as a reasonable question in the course of the eighteenth century.

At that stage, the prevailing opinion among travelers apparently became that "Europeans" should be concerned over Greek decay, even if it were premature to think how they could have changed it. Dumont reported about the Greeks of Smyrna that the "present condition of this Nation is so miserable,

84 Rauwolf, "Travels," 288.

85 See Federico Chabod, *Storia dell'idea d'Europa* (Laterza, 1961), 38–41.

86 Sandys, preface to *A relation of a iourney*. In some Venetian judgments, "the Greek subjects of the sultan were not just schismatic and heretics; they were worse than the Turks"; Stouraiti, *War, Communication, and the Politics of Culture*, 174.

87 Büsching, *Nuova Geografia*, vol. 29, 27.

and so apt to produce all the most tender Motions of Compassion of the Prospect by comparing it with their former Glory." In this way, the Greeks had become "slaves in a Country of which they are born, they are forc'd to pay a yearly Tribute, call'd the Carache, which is impos'd upon them, and their Fellow-Slaves the Jews." The "Greeks are naturally Proud," Dumont conceded, but only to conclude that even "the richest of 'em, of which there is a considerable Number, are look'd upon as Objects of Scorn and Contempt by the Turks."[88] Breval noted that "The Greeks, in spite of all the Oppression and Discouragements they labour'd under, still retain'd some Tincture of that Connoissance, which had so happily distinguish'd their Progenitors."[89]

Particular attention was dedicated to Cyprus, a fertile island the riches of which were exploited by the Ottoman government and greedy tax collectors. "Its inhabitants are most of them Greeks, and are computed at one hundred thousand, including about three thousand Turks, who live in the towns of Nicosia, Famagusta and Limassol. None of the Grand Signor's subjects are more oppressed, or live in greater poverty, than the inhabitants of this island; since they are taxed entirely according to the will of the mouhassil, who, buying his employment at a very high price, is obliged to reimburse himself at the expence of his miserable subjects."[90] While Sandwich's wording leaves it open as to whether only the Greek or all inhabitants were that much exploited—rebellions and petitions to the Sublime Porte against corrupt governors and tax collectors of Cyprus, like those of 1764– 65, were indeed also sustained by Muslim representatives—Niebuhr added that the Greeks had to pay a "very high poll tax," for which "many families were ruined and therefore forced to leave their homeland and seek their earnings elsewhere. Many also became Mohammedans in order to be freed from the tax."[91]

After so much pity for the Greeks languishing under the Turkish yoke, uttered by Germans, French, Englishmen, Danes, and others, one wonders why the Venetians did not take the opportunity to "re-elevate the civility" of their own "Greek" subjects instead of marking out their inferiority. To be fair, in both the Venetian and Ottoman cases, Greek local elites and personalities of the higher ranks held important economic and political positions, both locally and centrally, in some cases ascending to the inner circle of imperial power. While the Republic of Venice developed typical traits of modern colo-

88 Dumont, *A New Voyage*, 281–82.

89 Breval, *Remarks on several parts of Europe*, 38.

90 Montague Sandwich, *A voyage*, 390.

91 Niebuhr, *Entdeckungen im Orient*, 207; on the rebellion in Cyprus, see Mariti, *Travels*, vol. 1, 181–87.

nialism that the Ottoman Empire—like other traditional empires—lacked, even the Serenissima tried to integrate the native elites into its government system and cultural sphere.[92] Therefore, contempt was more of a social type, directed against peasants and poor or ordinary town dwellers rather than one regarding sheer Greekness. Furthermore, there were also approving, even touching, representations of the alien subjects' humble devotion towards imperial authority. In the Venetian case, the moving faithfulness of alien native subjects to the Lion of Saint Mark has become a self-reassuring mythological trope even after the loss of the Serenissima.[93]

Therefore, it cannot be said lightly that disparaging "Greeks" was a general trait of Venetian discursive self-representation. Nevertheless, when it fitted their own picture, Venetian observers were ready to express contempt for Greek lower ranks and peasant population—not because of their "Greekness" but because of their supposed savagery or barbarity or lack of civility, that is, if anything, their supposedly lost or forgotten "Greekness." After the historic loss of Crete to the Ottomans, while lauding the faithfulness of those Greek inhabitants who left their homes to flee "under the shadow of the Prince the subjects of which they were born," the Venetian writer Brusoni would insinuate the treasonous behavior of many other "peoples of Candia" who "willingly, and others without defence, embraced from the beginning the yoke of Ottoman barbarism, because they wore a wrecked heart eaten up by poison, and the worm of aversion and infidelity."[94] That there had been such a worm at all did not suggest that harmony and love had reigned between the governors and the islanders. The latter apparently did not feel so repelled by the perspective that, "after 500 years of Latin rule, the Greek Orthodox Cretans were rejoined to the Patriarchate in the old Byzantine capital." And after decades of commercialization of agriculture common to Venetian and Ottoman lands, the Greek Orthodox merchants could hope for new trade opportunities with North Africa and other Ottoman ports, while the landowners also had little to fear from the Ottoman takeover: neither a particularly oppressive tax system, nor —beyond the *cizye*—any unfair differential treatment compared to their Muslim neighbors.[95]

Still, according to Brusoni, only the subjects' treacherous character was supposedly to blame. Decades earlier, Sandys, on the island of Zakynthos

92 Cf. Stourati, *War, Communication and the Politics of Culture*, 1–8 and Lafi, "Africa and the Nature of the Ottoman Empire," 277.

93 Massimo Tomasutti, *Perasto 1797. Luogo di storia, luogo di memoria* (Il Poligrafo, 2007).

94 Brusoni, *Historia dell'ultima guerra*, 330.

95 Greene, *A Shared World*, 11, 24, 32, 130–31; quotation on page 11.

(which he calls *Zacynthus* and *Zant*), also came to a similar conclusion when he wrote:

> The inhabitants of this land are in generall Grecians (…) in habite they imitate the Italians, but transcend them in their revenges, and infinitely lesse civill. They will threaten to kill a merchant that will not buy their commodities, and make more conscience to breake a Fast then to commit a murther. (…) But cowardice is ioyned with their crueltie, who dare do nothing but sodainly, upon advantages; and are privately armed.[96]

At first sight, this sounded like a veritable condemnation of Zakynthos's Greeks, whose supposedly evil character could hardly be attributed to the infidel "wild beasts of mankind," which had never descended upon them, except for a short occupation in 1479–85. Apart from that short-lived episode, it was Venice that had governed the island, directly or indirectly, since 1194.

Sandys's observations were also, albeit indirectly, an unfavorable judgment of the Serenissima's regime at least on Zakynthos. Similar statements by occasional observers of the early seventeenth century of course did not hold absolute value. One same traveler could report contrasting impressions from different spots, because in fact the local conditions differed or because his own mood and perspective had changed. Also, alien rulers, whether Venetian, Spanish or Ottoman, with some good reason could always be accused of abuses and cruelty, and indeed would always find their critics and opponents. Henry Blount, when meeting with Sicilians, "heard some of them not sticke to say that the Greekes lived happier under the Turkes then they under the Spaniards."[97] We ignore whether this was a merely rhetorical emphasis to point out Spanish oppressiveness or a first-hand comparison by inhabitants of Sicily who had traveled Ottoman lands.

The Rehabilitation of Greekness in the Service of Anti-Ottoman Agendas

On Chios—of which Dumont wrote that "the Greeks, and in general all the Christian Inhabitants, enjoy so many Privileges, and retain so many Marks of their ancient Liberty, that if I did not sometimes see a Turbant, I shou'd almost forget that I am still in Turkey"—Sandys also noticed how the same Greeks, although highly taxed like all other Christians (such as the Genoese living

96 Sandys, *A relation of a iourney*, 7.

97 Blount, *A Voyage*, 60.

there), enjoyed a free life and an "unreproved exercise of religion." Well deserving on this island "the name of Merry Greeks," whenever possible they met to "intermix" by dancing and singing, men and women, during their leisure time. "The streets do almost all the night long partake their musicke. And whereas those of Zant do go armed into the field to bring home their vintage, these bring home theirs with songs and reioycings." Sandys contrasted Greek life on Zakynthos under Venetian rule with that on Chios under Ottoman rule, and although his account was generally critical regarding "the Turk," the comparison turned out more favorably for the latter.[98]



FIGURE 3.2 "The dancing of the Greeks": Travel impressions of Dumont's New Voyage in 1691–92. Jean Dumont, *A New Voyage to the Levant* (1696). By courtesy of Pontos World

The Englishman's description evokes bucolic scenes of joyfully chanting Greek peasants (Figure 3.2) returning home through olive groves laden with grapes and other fruits. Here, again, we can distinguish early filaments of a poetic and aesthetic fabric of Mediterranean landscape imaginaries, which we have already hinted at. From the seventeenth century, English poets, and writers, such as John Milton and the very same George Sandys, wrote it into existence "through the weaving of classical allusions, and through the creation of a pas-

98 Quotes from Dumont, *A New Voyage*, 185 and Sandys, *A relation of a iourney*, 14.

toral landscape that, characteristically English as it may be, tends to favour the shades of Mediterranean groves."[99] Poem after poem, and novel after novel, the Mediterranean shores became ideal places of both evasion and utopian projection. Delarivier Manley, in her 1709 novel *The New Atalantis*, made the goddess of justice, Astrea, return to Europe touching "upon the Cliffs of an Island named Atalantis, situated in the Mediterranean Sea. Tho' her Design was rather for Rome, or the Metropolis of France, or Great-Britain Places renowned in the Court of Jupiter for Hypocrisy, Politicks, Politeness and Vanity."[100] But the moral renewal of Europe could only come from the Mediterranean.

Jean-Michel Ganteau considers the English culture of the time "as a compound of the here and the there, of the insular and the Mediterranean – a compound in the acceptation that it mixes intricately, at particle-level and word-level, what opinion generally considers antithetical … It is English, granted, which means that it is thus naturally Mediterranean – without the possibility of reciprocity arising automatically."[101] The lack of reciprocity was considered a product of the time arrow: Britain had risen out of the Mediterranean past, but the present Mediterranean could not have the traits yet of "Englishness" because it had lost and forgotten its own treasure of "civility"—at least, for the time being. But fortunately, Britain, and by extension "Europe," had become the torch bearers of classical heritage who would finally bring "civility" back home.

This was another good motive for English seventeenth- and eighteenth-century culture to celebrate the "the romance of the past, and of the Roman, classical, Mediterranean past" as a form of self-celebration that insinuated the English faculty to restitute the classical tradition to its place of origin.[102] The regretful statement of loss that preceded the consequential promise of heeling alluded to another component of the forming Mediterranean metaphor, that is, the anthropological fascination for a backward landscape. As we know from the history of colonial conquest, the celebration of "standstill" and the "circularity of time" in exotic places was not just a reflective contemplation of the innocent beauty of the state of nature, it was also a mental prelude for conquest and domination. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, after the

99 Jean-Michel Ganteau, "Mediterranean Englishness: Another Progress of Romance," in *Cross-Cultural Encounters between the Mediterranean and the English-Speaking Worlds*, ed. Christine Reynier (Peter Lang, 2011), 117.

100 Delarivier Manley, *Secret memoirs and manners of several persons of quality or the New Atalantis, an island in the Mediterranean* [1709], vol. 1 (John Morphew, 1720), 7.

101 Ganteau, "Mediterranean Englishness," 117–18.

102 Ganteau, "Mediterranean Englishness," 126.

conquest of Gibraltar, Britain's candidacy for a rule over Mediterranean affairs spoke clearly through Browne's already quoted verses:

> The wond'rous Tale of *Actium* must be lost;
> When this is told on the same *Barbary* Coast;
> The Battle of *Lepanto* quite forgot,
> Where this, the greatest, and the last was fought;
> This Battel [sic], which at once made *Europe* know
> What *Albion* cou'd, what *Gallia* cou'd not do.[103]

These rhymes not only posit Britain as the successor of the Roman Empire. In a remarkable twist—"perfidious" for sure, if seen through revengeful Spanish eyes—Albion is also associated with the most epic battle against the Infidel, overshadowing with its own naval might Spanish past but forgotten triumphs and French recent enormous but ultimately vain efforts. A might that was exercised not for short-sighted selfish interest but the behest of Europe's fight for civility, as no one else could fulfil that duty better.

However, already some 80 years prior to the conquest of Gibraltar, natural philosopher Kenelm Digby, then a corsair, and sensitive to pragmatic calculus, had proposed a more prosaic solution for Britain's permanence in the Mediterranean: the outright colonial conquest of the Peloponnese.

> All the country of Morea is verie fruitfull in all thinges usefull to men, and maintaineth Zant, Caphalonia and other ilandes about it out of the superfluitie thereof. It maketh a great store of silke, and I hear it is rich in mines. The Turke hath litle force in it now, and by reason of his warres in other places could not assist it if it were invaded. One may land all about, and a castle att Corinth would preserve it from any forces to be brought by land; and the Greekes of the countrie would infallibly take part with a Christian invader, and would soon become a belliguous nation, as alreadie the Albanese are, which live within the land and attend to keep cattle. This soyle, but especially Lepanto, produceth excellent tobacco, and it is cheape (…) Certainly great advantage might be made by sending one out of England that knew how to cure it and make it up well, for the Turkes use the leafe rudely gathered and conserved without any art. Upon all this coast is great store of excellent fish.[104]

103 Browne, *Albion's Naval Glory,* 7.
104 Digby, *Journal of a Voyage*, 64.

Almost 200 years before the Greek uprising of 1821, and almost 300 years before great-power interference would back the formation of an Albanian nation state in 1912, at a time when the "commercial and shipping presence of the English on and off the western shores of Greece" tended to become "dominant,"[105] we see emerge in Digby's pragmatic fantasy the instrumental usefulness of Greeks and Albanians for the British power calculus in the Mediterranean.

The road to that point, however, was long. For most Greeks, the "Turkish yoke" weighed no heavier than that of any other empire. In many regions, Greek clerics, notables, and landowners—the recognized political speakers of their communities—were firmly integrated into the Ottoman economic, fiscal, and administrative system. The millet system enabled Greeks to "achieve considerable power and influence through the institution of the Orthodox Church." This was especially true for the Phanariotes of Constantinople, who could attain high government offices and even serve as governors of provinces like Moldavia and Wallachia. Furthermore, due to their central role in the empire's maritime economy, many Aegean islands enjoyed substantial self-government, tax exemptions, and prosperity. Later, when Venice attempted to implement Digby's colonial vision in Morea for itself, it was not least Greek notables and local leaders who helped the Ottoman forces expel the Venetians between 1714 and 1718.[106] A distinct national, anti-Ottoman, consciousness among Greeks emerged only toward the end of the eighteenth century, significantly spurred by Russian, British, and French influences.

These influences were shaped by the neo-Hellenistic ideals that became increasingly prevalent in European culture in the later eighteenth century. Several authors began to project on modern Greeks more significant traits of continuity, turning them "into living monuments of the past."[107] The renewed wave of classicism in tune with Winckelmann's exhortation "to imitate the ancients" still could make the contemporary Greeks look poor compared to their ancestors of the "classical" age.[108] But the revision of anti-Greek prejudice was helped by a parallel cultural development, which on the heels of James Macpherson's *Ossian* drove an "aesthetic revolution" that attributed the most authentic national spirit to humble illiterate folk and peasantry.[109]

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105 Andrews, *Ships, Money and Politics*, 124.

106 Gallant, *The Edinburgh History of the Greeks*, 24–26, quotation at page 29.

107 Saïd, "The Mirage of Greek Continuity," 280.

108 Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst* [1755] (Contumax, 2016), 7.

109 Anne-Marie Thiesse, *La création des identités nationales* (Éditions du Seuil, 1999), 23–66.

The new appreciation of the modern Greeks was convenient for the geopolitical goal of subverting, and ultimately dismantling, the Ottoman Empire. The Russian version of that same intent comprised an even broader reappraisal of Greek continuity as it extended it from neo-Hellenism to neo-Byzantinism prospecting a renewed Greek-Slavic confessional commonality. In the last days of the eighteenth century, when Russian successes nurtured neo-Byzantine fantasies, and when centrifugal tendencies for autonomy and national independence were manifesting themselves in several expanses under the Sublime Porte's rule, Sir William Eton published a *Survey of the Turkish Empire* that identified in Greek nationalism the main leverage to unhinge that empire. The "poor Greeks [of the Archipelago]", he wrote, "most feel the weight of the iron sceptre that governs them, and all the insults and oppression of the vile satraps of the tyrant." He also suggested that "according to the law of nations, the Turks have not, by length of possession, acquired a right to the dominion of the countries they conquered."[110]

Although many treaties were in force between the Ottoman Empire and the European states as an expression of practical power relations, the relationship between the Muslim monarchy and the principles laid down at Munster in 1648 as an arrangement between Christian sovereigns had always been an object of doctrinal dispute. Various diplomats maintained that the Munster principles would not apply as the Ottoman Empire was a "Barbarian" country.[111] During the eighteenth century, under the influence of Montesquieu and de Vattel, "civilized" and "lawful" states were attributed to a higher ground of moral legitimacy if compared to "oriental despotic" ones, an approach that led the "law of nations" even further away from equity and realism.[112] According to the circumstantial geopolitical convenience of Western great powers, both the Tsarist and Ottoman Empires were sometimes attributed to de Vattel's "enemy of humankind" classification, which exempted them from the full recognition of sovereignty by their adversaries. One may argue that if such were

110 William Eton, *A Survey of the Turkish Empire* (Cadell and Davies, 1799), ix, 295.

111 Harriet Rudolph, "The Ottoman Empire and the Institutionalization of European Diplomacy, 1500–1700," in *Islam and International Law*, ed. Marie-Luisa Frick and Andreas T. Müller (Brill, 2013), 161–83; Christine Vogel, "Istanbul as a hub of early modern European diplomacy," *European History Online* (EGO), Leibniz Institute of European History (IEG), Mainz, January 12, 2021, accessed May 9, 2025, http://www.ieg-ego.eu/vogelc-2020-en.

112 On Montesquieu: Jennifer Pitts, "International relations and the critical history of International Law," *International* Relations 31, no. 3 (2017): 285–86; on de Vattel: Walter Rech, *Enemies of Mankind: Vattel's Theory of Collective Security* (Brill, 2013), 1–2; Koen Stapelbroek and Antonio Trampus, editors' introduction to *The Legacy of Vattel's* Droit des gens (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 3–6.

the doctrines of law, international legal practice was ultimately decided by power relations. Ottoman power in the late eighteenth century was indeed slowly, but visibly, diminishing.

In this process the Greeks, the disparaging view of whom had manifested itself through the lenses of Western travelers for centuries, were now not only readmitted to Christendom but also Europeanized, whereas the "Turkish despots" were definitely otherized. Prejudices and value judgments of earlier days were reversed:

> When we view the Greeks in their more comprehensive character as a nation, their superiority over the Turks in knowledge is surprisingly great; (…) numbers of them speak Italian, but all have an activity and sprightliness which strongly contrasts with the stupid and pompous gravity of the Turks; an European feels himself as it were at home with them, and amongst creatures of his own species, for with Mahomedans there is a distance, a non-assimilation, a total difference of ideas … [113]

Eton added that it was certain that "the Greeks will emancipate themselves from the yoke of Turkey." He warned that, should this happen "with the assistance of the French, we shall certainly have an enemy in Greece; if through their interposition of Russia, and with our concurrence, a friend." Eton reported that according to Catherine II's views the entire conquest of all European Turkey had to be envisioned, and "a part of which was to be given to the House of Austria; the re-establishment of the Greek empire, and placing her grandson Constantine on the throne of Constantinople; of making Egypt an independent state; of giving to Poland a Russian for a sovereign, and ultimately incorporating it into her own empire; of making a conquest of Japan and a part of China, and establishing a naval power in those seas." Eton concluded that "the expulsion of the Turks from Europe, and the re-establishment of the Greek empire, would be more advantageous to Britain than even to Russia itself." In a similar scenario, which anticipated in approximate terms the defeat of the French Revolution, the Congress of Vienna, Congress-Poland, Greek independence, and even the Opium Wars and other nineteenth-century developments of which he only got a few wrong, he indicated the right way toward "the salvation of Europe."[114]

Against similar prospects, opposition arose within the British merchant class. A senior member of the Levant Company wrote a counter-pamphlet to

113 Eton, *A Survey*, 349.

114 Eton, *A Survey*, viii–x.

thwart the success of Eton's considerations, as they also foresaw free-trade provisions that would overcome the monopoly privilege of the Levant Company. "Bonaparte's fleet is destroyed," the high-ranking merchant argued, "and so will his army be very soon. The company will have no rivals in Turkey, in the French. Our trade will flourish again, if there are no interlopers, and pedlars." To keep the weakened Ottoman Empire intact was for the senior member of the Company the best solution. And to underline his point, the best he could do was apparently to return once again to the well-known anti-Greek tropes, which otherwise in Europe, on both sides of the Rhine and the Channel, had become outmoded: "You talk of driving the Turks out of Europe, and extol Russia to the skies, and also the Greeks, who you know are the most enterprising, cunning, deceitful, ambitious, vain and impudent people in the Levant."[115]

The Maghreb and "Africa Proper"

As for North Africa, already over the eighteenth century the discourses regarding "punitive retaliation" against piracy in the regencies had been enriched with suggestions of permanent conquest. "The project to civilize the Berbers is a philosophical dream," wrote Prussian geographer and theologist Büsching in the middle of that century, "the plan to destroy them to build colonies on the coasts, as the Romans did, is much more reasonable."[116] For the many who were used to making no difference between Berbers and Barbarians, a "civilized Barbary" sounded like an oxymoron anyway. Also, Jean Antoine Condorcet would recommend causing the savage nations "to disappear" for the sake of human progress.[117] Assertive and in other cases even openly bloodthirsty stances against "barbarians" and "savages" in the enlightened European scholarly literature provoked little doubts regarding legitimacy, as those "creatures" were considered "unlawful" by philosophical definition.

The mixed references to the "Barbary coast" and "Africa" also had another interesting implication. Büsching in his works referred to the continent and not just to North Africa, called *Libya* by Greeks in Antiquity, or its smaller central coastal subregion, then called *Africa* or later *Ifrīqya*. More precisely,

115 Merchant in Turkey [anonymous], *A letter to Mr. Eton, from a merchant in Turkey, in answer to a chapter in his Survey of the Turkish empire* (Mathews, 1799), 23; the figure of the "cheating Greek" competed for centuries with that of the "cheating Jew" on the Western European scale of the "most popular" born fraudster; see also Stouraiti, *War, Communication, and the Politics of Culture*, 174.

116 Büsching, *Nuova Geografia*, vol. 29, 23.

117 Jean Antoine Nicolas Caritat de Condorcet, *Outlines of an Historical View of the Progress of the Human Mind* (Lang & Ustick, 1796), 254.

the correspondent Roman province, which included Carthage and Tunis, developed roughly between Cirta (Constantine) and Syrtis Major (the Gulf of Sirte). Its name was later inflated to the geographical meaning of a "continent" as had already happened to mainland-Greek "Europe" and the Anatolian-Persian "Asia." Now, the Prussian geographer wrote that the "Africans are of two kinds: the Whites, who live on the shores and in the cities of the Corsairs (…), and the Blacks, who live in the Mediterranean Provinces towards the South, and these are properly the Barbarians, from whom the Barbary took its name. The almost unique religion is the Mohammedan."[118]

At least two aspects of this passage deserve some unpacking. The first is that for Büsching, "black Africa" began in the provinces south of the coastal zones, in "Moorish" areas, the inhabitants of which, which he called Moors, were in their majority presumably relatively more light-skinned than "black," or "sallow," if suntanned. Earlier, the French scholar Leclerc de Buffon had specified that "all those which are beyond the tropic from the Red Sea to the ocean, over a breadth of about a hundred or a hundred and fifty leagues, are still a species of Moors, but so tanned that they appear almost entirely black; especially the men are extremely dark, women are a little whiter, shapely and quite beautiful."[119] However, Büsching noted that "the Black class properly comprehends the Moors of Africa, and the Mulattos," and suggested that the Phoenicians had given the continent the name to distinguish "the sallow and black complexion of the Africans."[120] Did he not know how "black" the "Moors" really were? In his time and in his tongue "Moor" had already vaguely assumed the meaning of "Negro" and perhaps was therefore unable to tell an Arab from a Berber and a Berber from a "black African"—whatever the latter expression was supposed to mean.

No collective classification referable to the Mediterranean was perhaps more polyvalent in the Neo-Latin and Germanic languages than "Moor." From the Phoenician designation for the inhabitants of the West, *Mahurin*, it had morphed into a name for the Muslim inhabitants of the Maghreb and the Iberian Peninsula. In some periods and geographical stretches, it was restricted to only the speakers of the Hassaniya Arabic dialect (*al-lahjah al-ḥasāniyyah*), while in many other circumstances, on the contrary, it was extended to all sorts of different groups, be they Imazighen (Berbers), or Arabs, or non-Turkish

118 Büsching, *Nuova Geografia*, vol. 29, 25.

119 Georges-Louis Leclerc de Buffon, "Histoire naturelle de l'homme," in Georges-Louis Leclerc de Buffon, *Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière*, vol. 3 (Imprimerie Royale, 1749), 448.

120 Büsching, *A New System of Geography*, vol. 1, 48, 57.

North Africans or even Muslims in general—and not only Muslims. Leonhart Rauwolf's late-sixteenth-century distinction that the servants he encountered in Syria were "generally black Moors" could, from a later point of view, even appear to be a pleonasm.[121] Along with the anthropological racialization typical of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in many European languages "Moor" indeed became synonymous with "Black." Probably we could go ahead endlessly with sorting out other differentiations, and compare them with other denominations, like the Arabic denomination *bilād as-sūdān*, the Land of the Blacks, for huge stretches of country south of the Sahara (in present terms, roughly Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Chad, and Sudan), with which not just Egypt and the Regencies but the Ottoman Empire as a whole entertained relatively intense trade, diplomatic, and spiritual relations.[122] But we can also maintain, in accordance with Felicity Nussbaum, that "it is clearly counterproductive to reduce Others to Oriental and African, or to any other binary, as somehow representing racially, culturally or geographically separate groups," or "resort to sharp divisions and distinct histories of the Orientalized subject and the Negrified sub-Saharan subject." From nowhere but the Mediterranean was it easier to see how all these names and distinctions were confused, mixed, and somehow melted into one and the same European vision of the uncivilized other.[123]

The other interesting twist is Büsching calling the northernmost "black" African areas "Mediterranean" even where the country was descending not toward the sea of water but the sea of sand, which Braudel would call "another Mediterranean."[124] In hindsight, this looks like an anticipation also of the "wider Mediterranean," developed by nineteenth-century geography, and both popular and functional to the day for Western power designs regarding "Sub-Saharan Africa." The looming of the "Mediterranean World" accompanied the growing appetites for colonial conquest, although the lands subjected to colonial desire were assigned to different degrees of otherness. After the creation of a colonial "Mediterranean World," the de-Africanization of North Africa followed, which comprised no less than the de-Africanization of Africa,

121 Rauwolf, "Travels," 20.

122 Lafi, "Africa and the Nature of the Ottoman Empire," 282, 286.

123 Felicity A. Nussbaum, "Between 'Oriental' and 'Blacks So Called', 1688–1788," in *Postcolonial Enlightenment*, ed. by Daniel Carey and Lynn Festa (Oxford University Press, 2009), 142, 148; on the European conceptualization of the "black continent," see also Valentin Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge* (Indiana University Press, 1988), 5–11.

124 Braudel, "Mère méditerraneé," 7.

the former Roman Province. This was tantamount to a claim of North-African European-ness, the recovery of which was the task of the settler-colonial "return." At the same time, however, the nominal, if partial, but also fluid, "Mediterraneanizing" of Africa signaled how African affairs in general were considered a European business.

The Orient Is Readied to Sail

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, French geopolitical and colonial appetites regarding Ottoman territories also increased, the long-standing diplomatic cooperation with the Sublime Porte notwithstanding. Already Cardinal Richelieu had tried to foster French influence in Egypt. In 1769, in a moment of great Ottoman weakness under the pressures of the war with Russia and ʿAlī Bey al-Kabīr's strive for Mamluk restauration, Étienne François de Choiseul, a senior military officer and diplomat, suggested promoting negotiations with the Sublime Porte for the cession of Egypt to France.[125] In the 1770s and 1780s, with Egypt torn between Mamluk infights and Ottoman attempts to regain full control, French diplomacy continued its efforts to gain influence, at times among the forces striving for independence, other times among Ottoman loyalists. The French leading political circles split over the kingdom's strategy for the Mediterranean between those who favored sticking to the centuries-old loyalty with the Ottoman Empire and those who—like the Minister of the Navy and the Colonies, Antoine de Sartine, and the Inspecteur Général des Échelles du Levant et de Barberie, François Baron de Tott—considered it more convenient to break the weakening empire up into pieces, whereby France took aim, once again, at Egypt and the Levant:

> Egypt was both the wealthiest part of the Ottoman Empire and the keystone to world trade, straddling the most direct route between Europe and India. If France could gain control over Egypt, it promised to be the ultimate "game changer," restoring her geopolitical strength. Moreover, other regions, such as Lebanon, with its large Christian population and especially close commercial ties to France, were likewise natural candidates for French takeover.[126]

125 Ferenc Tóth, "Égypte. La double mission du Baron De Tott à la fin de l'Ancien Régime," *Africa: Rivista trimestrale di studi e documentazione dell'Istituto italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente* 57, no. 2 (2002): 148–49.

126 Alexander Johnson and Daša Pahor, *The François Baron De Tott Archive of Franco-Ottoman Trade, Diplomacy And Espionage History (1760s–1780s)* (Antiquariat Daša Pahor GbR, 2019), 6; see also Robert Solé, *Bonaparte à la conquête de l'Égypte* (Éditions du Seuil, 2006), 16–21.

In 1777, de Tott proposed a detailed plan for the French conquest of Egypt, which the French involvement in the American Revolution postponed. In 1783, a new exploratory trip to Egypt and Syria was undertaken by Constantin-François de Chasseboeuf, Comte de Volney. He concluded that it would be good economically to have a French colony there; however, as a principle, he was skeptical about colonialism. The Revolution in France did not pause French planning. On the one hand, the loss of Saint-Domingue/Haiti after 1791 made new colonies closer to home seem even more desirable, and Egypt was the privileged target because it would give France an edge over Britain in the struggle for India. On the other hand, continuities with the old regime were felt in the ranks of the political and economic elites, where frequently the most "revolutionary" innovation was the replacement of the title of nobility with that of *citoyen*. This was the case for Charles Magallon, the leader of the French merchant community in Egypt, who tirelessly lobbied for a French military invasion, both during the late absolutist period and the republican period, when he motivated his interventionism with the liberation of the oppressed, in line with the rhetoric that the new era required. In 1795, a delegate from the Committee of Public Safety went to Alexandria to meet Magallon, but a breakthrough was achieved only in 1797, after Charles Maurice de Talleyrand was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs. In 1798, the Directorate decided to proceed.[127]

On May 19 of that year a fleet led by General Napoleon Bonaparte's flagship *L'Orient* set sail to travel and "liberate" Egypt from despotism. This was the starting shot for modern colonial expansion in the Mediterranean. François-René de Chateaubriand, the leading French Romantic writer of the early nineteenth century

> considered Bonaparte the last crusader, whereas he felt himself to be the last Frenchman to leave his country to travel the Holy Land with the ideas, goals and feelings of a pilgrim of earlier times. According to Chateaubriand, there were a few places like Bethlehem, (…) where there was some resemblance of "real", that is, "European" civilization. It was much easier to come across plenty of Orientals, Arabs, whose civilization level was so low and who were so barbaric and diverse that they deserved conquest.[128]

127 Rutledge, *Sea of Troubles*, 111–13, 122–33.

128 Aleya Khattab, "Schießen und beten! 'Göttliche Missionierung' – damals wie heute?," in *Deutsche Kultur und Islam am Mittelmeer*, ed. Laura Auteri and Margherita Cottone (Kümmerle Verlag, 2005), 9–39.

Neither did Chateaubriand get it right on his own account, nor did he on Napoleon's. He himself was far from being the "last" civilized man asserting disparagingly about Arabs and "Orientals" that they deserved colonization. And the invasion of Egypt—which was subsequent to, and also can be considered consequential of, the French Revolution—was certainly not the last Western crusade but rather the first one of a new series, this time for "civilization," "progress," "freedom," "universal rights," and so on, all moved from the north and the west through the Mediterranean into North Africa and West Asia. The "long nineteenth century" that followed would be a century of European imperialist powers—Great Britain and France, later accompanied by Italy and Spain (with the assistance of the Habsburg and Tsarist Empires on other flanks)—invading and subduing the Levant and North Africa. In that period, the Mediterranean would become "the politically most important region of European imperialist activity" and "fulcrum of the greatest inter-imperialist rivalry."[129] Moreover, "America's first response to terrorism," which was unleashed on Tripoli by U.S. navy forces after Congress decided to suspend its danegeld payments and the *bāshā* declared war accusing the Americans of disrespecting the clauses of a previously established peace agreement, occurred as early as 1801–05.[130] The making of a "Mediterranean World" was both contextual with, and functional to, these developments.

129 Rutledge, *Sea of Troubles*, 8.

130 Bradley E. Smith, "America's First Response to Terrorism: The Barbary Pirates and the Tripolitan War of 1801," *Military Review*, November–December (2005): 65–69; Paul Freye, "USA's Tribut an nordafrikanische Seeräuber," *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* 18, no. 5 (1941): 274; Rutledge, *Sea of Troubles*, 179–82. The actual context of the episode comprises the Anglo-French military operations in the Mediterranean during the French Republican and Napoleonic periods, and the ensuing problems for enemy and neutral merchant shipping. The capture of even neutral vessels was, under certain circumstances, regarded as legally legitimate. The number of American merchant ships taken by French and allied privateers, or—in different periods—by British and allied privateers, and subsequently condemned in prize courts as lawful prizes, probably exceeded the number of vessels seized by the Regencies, whose analogous actions, however, were labelled "piracy." See Silvia Marzagalli, "The United States and the Mediterranean during the French Wars (1793–1815)," in *Small and Medium Powers in Global History*, ed. Jari Eloranta et al. (Routledge, 2018), 54–60.

PART 2

A "Mediterranean World," 1798–1973

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CHAPTER 4

The Making of a "Mediterranean World," 1798–1876

With Bonaparte's *L'Orient* sailing across the Sea to liberate Egypt from despotism and stage the founding gestures of the "Mediterranean World," we may pause the account of events for a moment to reflect on the intrigue of thoughts and actions that that "world" would be made of. The building process of the Mediterranean region that stretched between the French Revolution and World War One was indeed an expression of both. It was the long-term result of the discursive Europeanization of Europe since the late fifteenth century, and the practical Europeanization of the Mediterranean since the seventeenth century. It was an outcome of intellectual discourses regarding "the Orient," geography, archaeology, climate, race, and anthropology. It was the effect of commercial interests of European empires and the emerging industrial capitalist nations in western Europe, which were seeking geopolitical control over trade routes and markets and looking for opportunities to lay their hands on raw materials and labor resources of other continents. Finally, it was a plausible, if perhaps not strictly necessary, consequence of the evolution of contract theory, the politics of liberty, and the self-righteous "moralization" of international law, all expressions of an overarching Western philosophy of history, the imperative of which was to bestow upon "Africa and Asia the principles and example of the freedom, reason and illumination of Europe."[1]

All these different aspects were present in the French Republican Army's invasion of Egypt. More actions by France, Great Britain, Austria, Russia, Spain, and other European powers would follow during the next century, which step by step would subjugate the Moroccan Sultanate, dismantle the Ottoman Empire, colonize its former's provinces in Africa and Asia, and make most of the European ones formally independent under great-power tutelage. European companies, governments, navies, and armies were the practical unifiers of the "Mediterranean World" and geographers its main conceptual builders. Like other intellectuals, geographers adhered to their countries' ruling elites and as such were no strangers to the dominant classes' economic interest. In spinning their Mediterranean narrative, they leaned on philosophers, historians, archaeologists, philologists, art historians, and orientalists. Responding to the positivistic requirements of scientific discourse that over time became dominant, they would corroborate their claims with geophysical, geological,

1 Condorcet, *Outlines of an Historical View*, 255.

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climatological, oceanographical, botanical, and other data. But the core narrative remained what it was: the translation of Enlightenment speculations regarding the meaning of history into a language of space description. Without waiting for a pleonasm like "geopolitics" to appear, these developments already underscored how human geography was shaped by ideology. Outside the realm of the political, its taxonomies and classifications meant next to nothing.

At the end of the process, by way of circular argumentation, the existence of a Mediterranean *Erdgebiet* or "world" was considered to be scientifically proven. Ironically, the discovery of "Mediterranean landscapes and flora" or "Mediterranean climates," sometimes even far away from Mediterranean waters, was no motive of embarrassment for that theory.[2] When Charles Dudley Warner wrote of southern California "Here is our Mediterranean!", he was not ridiculed but lauded.[3] What under normal circumstances of logical reasoning would signal an error of classification in this case was justified by the Mediterraneanized parable of universal history. It predestined the "Mediterranean World" to be describing not just a particular sea and its surroundings in a specific time but a geographical and historical typus, one that could well give rise to a "wider Mediterranean" as well as to "other Mediterraneans"—"wider" and "other" Mediterraneans that European civilizers and modernizers were commanded by Clio to conquer and unify, and indeed would dominate almost completely by the end of the nineteenth century.

The European champion of Mediterranean-ness was to become France, in both praxis and theory. As we have seen, already in the eighteenth century there was hardly any European sea power or littoral country, small or great, that would abstain from making its own contribution, substantial or symbolic, to the Europeanization of the Mediterranean. Yet, no other European power would try so relentlessly and at the end so successfully to unify that space in the Western imagination as France did. It managed to do so even without

2 At the foot of Mount Lebanon, Alphonse de Lamartine would find the same "palm trees, pines, succulents, ivy, wild vines, flowers" that Rauwolf had admired 260 years earlier; but Lamartine would declare them to be part of "a typical Mediterranean picture," an association that Rauwolf, despite having traveled to Liguria, Provence, and other places with the awareness of a botanist before visiting the Levant, had not the least thought of; citations drawn from David Mendelson, "The Idea of the Mediterranean in Early Nineteenth-Century French Literature," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 17, no. 1 (2002): 25–48. "Mediterranean climate" is another product of imagination: "In spite of a well-established stereotype, the climate is neither homogeneous nor favourable"; Mauro Spotorno, "Ambiente/Environment," in *Mediterranean Lexicon/Lessico mediterraneo*, ed. Paolo Giaccarica and Maria Paradiso (Società Geografica Italiana, 2012), 6.

3 Charles Dudley Warner, *Our Italy* (Harper & Brothers, 1891), 15.

achieving a military predominance over the sea, which remained with the British navy. As the British geographical mind grew increasingly global, France attained and exercised an uncontested intellectual hegemony over all things Mediterranean, even though other contributions were not absent.

Among the few exceptions from French discursive hegemony in the first half of the nineteenth century were the contributions of German philosophers and geographers, who exerted a certain influence on the French geographical mind. Most of them had no particular commitment to the maritime ambitions of the Habsburg Empire or any other German state. Their stances were theoretical, whereas French Mediterraneanism was one of action along with, and sometimes even before, poetic and theoretical elaboration. What Karl Marx had remarked regarding social change and revolution seemed to hold for the Mediterranean as well: while the French showed resolve in putting their thought into practice, "we [Germans] are *philosophically* contemporaries of the present without being *historically* present."[4] Yet the Franco-German parallelism in early Mediterranean region building, albeit only intellectual at the time, remains remarkable in underlining the European character of the project.

1 Napoleon in Egypt, 1798–99

On July 2, 1798, General Napoleon Bonaparte's *L'Orient* anchored three miles away from Alexandria together with other ships of the French fleet. The troops landed to enter and "secure" the town. Some days later Napoleon issued a proclamation to the people of Egypt, which was translated into Arabic and printed to be disseminated among the knowledgeable inhabitants of the Nile Delta. Among other announcements, it contained the following passage:

> In the name of God, gracious and merciful. There is not God but God; he has no son or associate in his kingdom. (…) Inhabitants of Egypt! When the Beys tell you that the French are come to destroy your religion, believe them not: it is an absolute falsehood. Answer those deceivers, that they are only come to rescue the rights of the poor from the hands of their tyrants, and that the French adore the Supreme Being, and honour the Prophet and his holy Coran. (…) The French are true Mussulmen. Not long since they marched to Rome, and overthrew the Throne of the Pope, who excited the Christians against the professors

4 Karl Marx, "Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie. Einleitung" [1844], in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, vol. 1 (Dietz Verlag, 1956), 383.

> of Islamism (the Mahometan religion). Afterwards they directed their course to Malta, and drove out the unbelievers, who imagined they were appointed by God to make war on the Mussulmen. The French have at all times been the true and sincere friends of the Ottoman Emperors, and the enemies of their enemies.[5]

In a letter addressed to the Sublime Porte, in which he reiterated similar concepts, Napoleon suggested to the Grand Vizier that "your enemy (…) is in the heart of the Mediterranean," meaning by this the anti-French, Catholic-British alliance.[6] He boasted that he had unseated the Pope, and further weakened the enemy by taking over the island of Malta and ousting the Knights from power on his way to Egypt. After all, France, by attacking Egypt, was disrupting a strategic understanding with the Ottoman Empire that, thanks to the magnitude of reciprocal strategic and economic interests, had lasted since 1536, even surviving the War of Candia and other major challenges. To disguise the historic breach and legitimize his invasion in the eyes of the Egyptian population, Napoleon falsely claimed that the French campaign was in accordance with the Sublime Porte's intentions. Istanbul had to face numerous Mameluke stand-offs, but in fact was not inclined in the least to involve the French Republic in the handling of the empire's internal affairs. In Istanbul, "sultan Selim III was struggling to understand how the French could have so deceitfully stabbed him in the back. Although never a formal ally, France had for centuries been considered a friend."[7] Hardly could the Sultan have imagined how, a century and a half later, Western sociologists and anthropologists would classify honor as an anachronistic marker of Mediterranean backwardness.[8]

However, Napoleon, in his friendly address to the people of Egypt, whom he was so happy to free from the despotic rule of the Mamelukes, did not hesitate to promise that "our opposers, whose insatiable avarice has continually excited disobedience and insubordination, [will] be trodden in the dust, and annihilated!" Nor did he forget to warn that "the dreadful punish-

5 "Translation of the Proclamation issued by Bonaparte, in the Arabic language, on his landing in Egypt," in *Copies of Original Letters from the Army of General Bonaparte in Egypt intercepted by the Fleet under the command of Admiral Lord Nelson*, vol. 1 (J. Wright, 1798), 235–36.

6 "Bonaparte's letter to the Grand Vizier," in *Copies of Original Letters from the Army of General Bonaparte in Egypt intercepted by the Fleet under the command of Admiral Lord Nelson*, vol. 3 (J. Wright, 1800), 177.

7 Rutledge, *Sea of Troubles*, 147.

8 John G. Peristiany, ed., *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1965).

ment of death awaits those who shall take up arms for the Beys and against us." And to leave not the least doubt regarding his beneficial intentions, he added that "every village that shall oppose the French army shall be burned to the ground."[9] This was, indeed, what would happen numerous times.

The extreme brutality that the French army used during the campaign was testified to by members of the expedition, one of whom wrote in a private letter: "We disembark in a country that never thought of us, we pillage their villages, ruin their inhabitants and violate their wives."[10] For example, while conquering the Nile Delta, punishment was inflicted on a village for refusing to provide supplies to the invaders. As one Seargent François recalls, "[w]e killed about 900 men, not counting the women and children, who remained in their habitations, to which we set fire with our musketry and artillery." This was, so he added, "to provide a terrible object lesson to these half-savage and barbarous people."[11]

During the French occupation of most of the Nile Delta, Suez and a great part of the Nile Valley, and the short-lived invasion of Syria along the Mediterranean coast, rape and casual killings of civilians, the destruction of harvest, the devastation of fields, the burning down of villages, the abduction of children 12 to 16 years old to forcibly recruit soldiers, capital punishments, exemplary hostage execution, or bastinadoing of uncooperative village elders and tax-renitent fellahin, as well as mass massacres of prisoners of war, were all part of the ordinary administrative and warfare techniques of the envisaged "French Republic of Egypt."

Wherever the French troops secured territory and repressed resistance, Napoleon immediately considered what he himself thought was the carrot side of securing political power by creating diwans and other consultative organs, populated with religious and juridical notables nominated by himself, or nominally elected bodies with a consultative function that would be recognized by wider parts of the population, to stabilize government. He mainly hoped to involve "the Arabic-speaking urban middle classes as the potential backbone of a French Republic of Egypt, just as middle-class liberals under-

9 "Translation of the Proclamation issued by Bonaparte," in *Copies of Original Letters*, vol. 1, 236–37.

10 "A letter from one of the innumerable Savants, whom Bonaparte dragged in his train, Cairo, July 26," in *Copies of Original Letters from the Army of General Bonaparte in Egypt intercepted by the Fleet under the command of Admiral Lord Nelson*, vol. 2 (J. Wright, 1799), 41.

11 Quoted in Juan Cole, *Napoleon's Egypt: Invading the Middle East* (St. Martin's Griffin, 2007), 63.

pinned the Paris Directory."[12] Rites, colors, festivals, and symbols of the French Republic were imposed on the occupied population. Immediately after the conquest of Alexandria, Napoleon ordered that all inhabitants "of whatever nation they may be, shall be obliged to wear the tricoloured cockade. The Muftis alone shall have the privilege of wearing a tricoloured shawl."[13] Any effort at distinguishing cynical power calculus from ideological conviction regarding the ideal form of government would probably fail to understand reality.

The same holds true for what even the French would have conceded was the stick side of political power, where many saw themselves as the revolutionary liberators who had to tackle "ferocious savages" in the countryside and die-hard *ancient regime* reactionaries in the towns. Their massacres in Egypt "recalled the way the revolutionary army dealt with the pro-monarchy, pro-Church revolt of the peasants of the Vendée in western France in the period 1793–1796."[14] Moderate liberal criticism of the repressive methods that occasionally arose among the army's ranks and accompanying savants did not question the root causes of violence as this kind of criticism apparently had no better argument than accusing the leader of degrading himself to "savage," "barbarian," and "oriental" cruelty and making a horrible "Mameluke" of himself.

Among the most salient violent episodes were the mass executions of up to 2,000 prisoners in the Citadel of Cairo in late October 1798 after the Cairo Revolt, which came on top of around thousands of Egyptians killed in the fighting and the many hundreds of villagers in the surroundings of Cairo decapitated by the French for punishment; and the French massacres after the siege of Jaffa (*Yāfā*) in Syria, in addition to the execution "of several thousand unarmed Ottoman prisoners of war" ordered by Bonaparte.[15] Only "six months into the occupation, the French had likely killed at least 12,000 Egyptians."[16] As Capt. Gay wrote in a letter, "we had to combat barbarians, wholly unacquainted with the rights of war, who exercised every species of cruelty upon the unhappy men who fell into their hands."[17] The savagery attributed to barbarian natives who desperately try to resist their own liberation, bestowed onto them by the generosity of Western invaders, has become a standard excuse for the ruthlessness of imperialist armies and mercenaries.

12 Cole, *Napoleon's Egypt*, 74.

13 "Bonaparte, Orders, July 3rd," in *Copies of Original Letters*, vol. 1, 246–47.

14 Cole, *Napoleon's Egypt*, 47.

15 Cole, *Napoleon's Egypt*, 211–13, 224, 242–43.

16 Cole, *Napoleon's Egypt*, 242.

17 "Capt. Gay, Cairo, July 27," in *Copies of Original Letters*, vol. 2, 48.

The French occupation of the main parts of the Nile Delta and Valley was achieved between August 1798 and January 1799. When Napoleon marched into Syria to anticipate Sultan Selim III's counteroffensive, his troops were ultimately rejected by the *wālī* of Sidon, Aḥmad Jazzār Pāshā, who, thanks to a monopoly on the flourishing cotton trade with France, had acquired the resources to build up a strong army, which now was able to fend off the French assault on Acre in May 1799 with the support of the Sultan's elite troops and with British support from the sea, thus turning the fate of Napoleon's dream of an "Oriental Empire" into a phase of retreats.[18] Bonaparte, to the surprise of most of his own commanders, left Egypt in August 1799 to forward his political career in France, leaving the command to Gen. Jean Kléber with the promise of soon sending help once he arrived back home.[19] After Kléber was assassinated in Cairo by the Syrian student Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī, it was the turn of Gen. Abdullah Menou (baptized Jacques before converting to Islam) to lead the French into final defeat. The remaining French troops were repatriated on board British ships in 1801. On that occasion, Britain took part of the booty of archaeological relics that had been pilfered by the French savants and soldiers in its own possession.

The French colonizing projects for Egypt, put forth by leaders of the French Republic like Bonaparte and Talleyrand, were based on a long-term competition with Great Britain and projection of French power, which under the Ancient Regime had sustained a severe setback during the Seven Years War. Egypt was seen as a partial reparation for the losses suffered in the New World and the status of French Caribbean sugar plantations rendered precarious by the revolutionary unrest of the slave and "colored" population. One hope was that Egypt would replace the foreseeable definite loss of those plantations. Adj. Gen. Pierre François Boyer, who after the July Revolution would participate as a general in the 1831–33 conquest of Algeria (distinguishing himself for the brutality used against the local population), in late July 1798 wrote to his parents from Cairo that "the government turned its views toward Egypt and Syria, countries that, due to their climate and their fertility, are capable of being made the storehouse of France, and, in the process of time, the mart of her commerce with India."[20]

But it was not all about Mammon or Plutus; there was also Clio. Bonaparte, on board *L'Orient* on its way to Egypt, "discoursed with his friends on biblical

18 Rutledge, *Sea of Troubles*, 150–51.

19 "Gen. Napoleone Bonaparte to Gen. Jean-Baptiste Kléber, Alexandria, 22 August 1799," in *Copies of Original Letters*, vol. 3, 21–23.

20 "Boyer from Cairo to his parents, 28 July 1798," in *Copies of Original Letters*, vol. 1, 15.

and classical history, especially subjects related to the Mediterranean islands they were passing." Their fantasies went to the "cradle of sciences and arts," the pharaohs, their temples, obelisks and pyramids, "the valleys where the children of Israel had wandered," and the conviction matured in them that they were to "re-establish civilization, the sciences and arts in Egypt."[21] Economic interest, geostrategic calculus, cultural background, and ideological conviction can be separated from each other on paper, yet in the mind and action of real-life protagonists they are inseparable.

But of course, the proclamations addressed to the local population made no mention of the economic interest and strategic goals behind the French invasion, although they were plain to see for any informed Egyptian or Ottoman—or British, for that matter—observer. Were France to succeed in gaining control over Cairo and the ports of Suez, Damietta and Rosetta, it would gain control over the trade route between the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean and deal the British commercial and maritime interests a major blow.[22] This was the visible backdrop of sheer power politics against which an alien force ravaged the country "like demons of the Devil's army."[23] No wonder that proclamations according to which the French were true Muslims who had selflessly entered the country to free its people from tyranny could not be taken seriously by either Muslim or non-Muslim inhabitants of the country.

The educated intellectual and religious Muslim elite of Egypt had a fairly well-informed notion not only of France's geopolitical interests but also of the French Revolution, which most of them rejected from a conservative standpoint, no less concerned as they were than their fellow European conservatives with safeguarding the legitimacy of the social and juridical order through the adherence to religion, tradition and customs, and the obedience to political authority.[24] In Constantinople, Greek Orthodox Metropolitan Gregory, in a Patriarchal Epistle issued on September 2, 1798, also condemned the "piratical attempt on Egypt" perpetrated by "these aliens from God" and expressed confidence that the Sultan, assisted by the "Monarchs of Russia and Great Britain," would "punish these destroyers of mankind." The Greek Orthodox poet and chronicler of Syrian origin, Niqūlā al-Turk, who at the time lived in Cairo, underlined the inauthenticity of the colonizers' religious proclamations by pointing out how the French had "used a variety of tricks and followed differ-

21 Cole, *Napoleon's Egypt*, 17–18.

22 Cole, *Napoleon's Egypt*, 13–17.

23 Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti, *Al-Jabartī's Chronicle of the First Seven Months of the French Occupation of Egypt* [1798] (Brill, 1975), 100.

24 See the comments regarding al-Jabartī in Prusskaya, "Arab Chronicles," 54–55.

ent strategies to stay in power."[25] For the most part, the Copt and Greek Orthodox population would abstain from acts of armed resistance, sometimes attracting the ire of Muslims. Some of their leaders were happy to join the ranks of the collaborationist administration, as did several Muslim and Jewish personalities. Napoleon found temporary allies and collaborators among religious and regional leaders, notables, tribesmen, merchants of different areas, and confessions, who however mostly acted for convenience or to save their family wealth and life, and only rarely, so it seems, out of conviction. By contrast, the acts of resistance multiplied once the fellahin and Bedouins understood that the Sultan in Constantinople did not back the French invasion as Napoleon had tried to make them believe, and French soldiers and tax collectors began to make their life even harder than the beys had.

There are various testimonies that confirm how Napoleon's profession of Islam was seen by himself as instrumental in securing French government over Egypt. He "was attempting to find a way for French deists to be declared Muslims for purposes of statecraft."[26] During the journey of the fleet, it is reported that Napoleon had instructed his soldiers to act with the Egyptians "as you did with the Jews and with the Italians. Treat their Muftis and Imams with respect, as you did the Rabbis and Bishops." Had not his model empire, Ancient Rome, "protected all religions" with their legions?[27] The reference to Rome was to a "European" tradition of a "Mediterranean empire" to which the French soldiers should aspire.

Since the representation of the French colonial empire in the Mediterranean as a "Muslim Empire" would become a long-term, if unsteady, feature of French propaganda over the next 160 years, it may be worth briefly considering it. It has to be said that the French disposition toward Islam was grounded on more than cynical power calculus, if it is true that "Bonaparte's admiration for the Prophet Muhammad (…) was genuine."[28] Apart from the recognition of the Prophet's "greatness," which was likely a narcissistic personal projection, there were in the French intellectual traditions aspects that made a dialogue with Islam easier at least in French eyes. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Caliphs for some time sympathized with the profession of religious tolerance and the anti-Spanish posture of Protestant powers and the greater political independence from Rome of France and Venice. Moreover,

25 Prusskaya, "Arab Chronicles," 55.

26 Cole, *Napoleon's Egypt*, 129.

27 "Proclamation of Bonaparte June 22 on Board L'Orient," in *Copies of Original Letters*, vol. 1, 238.

28 Cole, *Napoleon's Egypt*, 129.

early Protestant movements had produced some strands of anti-trinitarian critique that would lead to the foundation of unitarian sects, some of which viewed Islam in a rather friendly light. Although they were soon declared heretic and persecuted by Protestant authorities, they had bridged the most substantial theological divide between Islam and Christianity.

In France, a country of Catholic majority but strong secular tendencies, anti-trinitarian criticism survived in the broader context of anti-Catholic critique and re-emerged among the philosophical and theological foundations of Enlightenment and Freemasonry, which also entailed tendentially benevolent visions of Islam.[29] When Napoleon was quoting in Egypt the Supreme Being, whose cult had been established four years earlier by the National Convention, he was asserting not just a cultural or political but a theological affinity between the French Republic and Islam. However politically instrumental, this ideological intent was probably authentic and perhaps, had Napoleon succeeded, French governors of Egypt sooner or later would have deliberated that they were even the better Muslims.[30] Enlightened hubris, however sympathetic with anti-trinitarian stances it might be, was no less a valid reason for Egyptians to resist French occupation.

One last interesting aspect of the making of a "Mediterranean World" is the reason why Napoleon brought along a group of 167 *savants*, who were partly dedicated to exploring the potential agricultural and mineral richesses of the future colony but who were also dedicated to investigating the art, history, and archaeology of the country (Figure 4.1), which had little practical use beyond the looting of objects and ideology manufacturing. Often the work of these savants hindered the military field operations causing the ire of soldiers and their derision of the savants.[31] The data gathered by the scientific expedition was brought back to France in 1801. Between 1809 and 1828, 23 volumes of *Description de l'Égypte* would appear and exert a strong influence on French historical, geographic, and geopolitical visions.

The scientific expedition and the elaboration of its findings therefore had costs, and these wilful investments by the French Republic, then Empire, then Kingdom would hardly be explainable if the intent of cultural penetration and appropriation had not been based on deep-seated political and philosophical

29 Cottone, "Das Islam-Bild," 197–213.

30 Dominque Vivant Denon, an artist who participated in the expedition, and who would inspire the discipline of Egyptology with his writings and become the first director of the Louvre museum, grew angry with the Muftī of Rosetta/Rashīd for not intending to celebrate the birthday of the Prophet under French occupation; see Cole, *Napoleon's Egypt*, 123.

31 Cole, *Napoleon's Egypt*, 57; Rutledge, *Sea of Troubles*, 137.

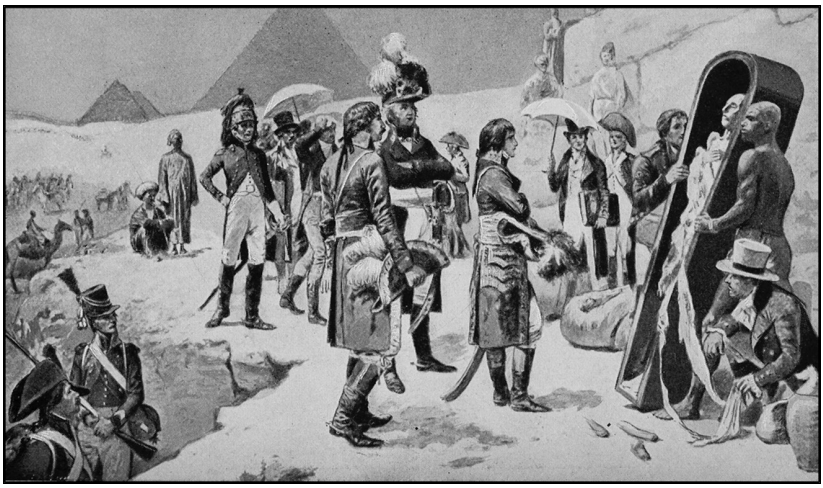


FIGURE 4.1 Napoleon in Egypt. James H. Robinson, *Medieval and modern times* (1919); Public Domain, Wikimedia Commons

convictions. The French felt that they were acting on behalf of the whole of Europe and "mankind," and apparently, they were not the only ones believing this. It is said that Alexander von Humboldt also "intended to join Napoleon's military expedition to Egypt in 1798 as a scientific observer but missed the boat" and therefore traveled to South America through Spain instead, so as to confirm the overall colonial and imperial context of geographic exploration.[32]

For France's future Mediterranean expansionism, Napoleon's expedition to Egypt "announced a new imperialism with a civilizing pretext, inspired by the ideals of the Enlightenment and the Revolution."[33] French geopolitical moves in the Levant and the conquest of Algiers, Tunis, and Morocco would replicate the model, although "civilization" was occasionally supplanted by the eschatology of "modernization." At the same time, according to a widely shared scholarly position, it marked the starting point of the Mediterranean as a region.[34] The "interaction between military conquest and scientific exploration," together with the idea of putting forth a mission of civilization and universal progress, were, according to Jan Jansen, the "two principles that became

32 Derek Gregory and Noel Castree, editors' introduction to *Human Geography*, vol. 1 (SAGE, 2012), xxviii.

33 Patrice Bret, *L'Egypte au temps de l'expédition de Bonaparte 1798–1801* (Hachette, 1998), 283.

34 Borutta and Lemmes, "Die Wiederkehr des Mittelmeerraumes," 390.

constitutive for both the French expansion in the Mediterranean area and the genesis of the very concept of *Méditerranée*."[35]

There is one episode in particular that underlines Jansen's point, and more generally the centrality of the Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment philosophies of history as the ultimate fountain of European imaginative geography regarding the Mediterranean. The pyramids of Egypt, considered the most staggering remains of "ancient civilization," were the best conceivable scenic background to underline the expedition's "historic," and thus "legitimate," character. According to the *Correspondance de Napoléon* published in 1870, the French troops saw for the first time how "the dim but majestic outlines of the Pyramids shimmered in the haze" when they arrived at Umm Dīnār on the left bank of the Nile, on July 19, 1798.[36] In fact, Umm Dīnār was still some 15 miles away from the al-Gīzah Necropolis, but according to the *Correspondance de Napoléon*, "[a]ll the glasses were turned on these greatest and oldest monuments that left the hands of men. The three pyramids lined the desert horizon."[37] In the morning of July 21, when the French Army moved on to engage the Mameluke troops led by Murād Bey in what would be known as the Battle of the Pyramids, "Napoleon said to his troops, showing them the pyramids: 'soldiers, forty centuries are watching you!'"[38]

The historic phrase has been translated and reported in different versions, most of which leave intact its core meaning.[39] That the pyramids were visible from the battlefield has been doubted because the distance between Awsīm and Imbāba, where the battle took place, and the Pyramids of al-Gīzah is still remarkable, although the western flank of the troops may have been as close as five to eight miles. What is certain about the episode is that it is "Napoleonic," whether it was an instant mystification uttered by Napoleon I on the battlefield, a fabrication of the then First Consul after his return to Paris, or a historized mystification inspired by his nephew Napoleon III who sponsored the 1870 edition. Even in case of an invention by a later chronicler, this inven-

35 Jan Jansen, "Die Erfindung des Mittelmeerraums im kolonialen Kontext," in *Der Süden. Neue Perspektiven auf eine europäische Geschichtsregion*, ed. Frithjof Benjamin and Martina Winkler (Campus, 2007), 180.

36 David G. Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon*, vol. 1 (Scribner, 1966), 244.

37 *Correspondance de Napoléon Ier: publiée par ordre de l'empereur Napoléon III*, vol. 29 (H. Plon- J. Dumaine, 1870), 447.

38 *Correspondance de Napoléon Ier*, vol. 29, 450.

39 "Forward! Remember that from those monuments yonder forty centuries look down on us" (Chandler, *The Campaigns*, 244); " … from the heights of these monuments, forty centuries are watching us" (Gregory, "Imaginative geographies," 477); "soldiers! From the heights of these pyramids, forty centuries are looking down on you" (Cole, *Napoleon's Egypt*, 63). For a discussion of these versions, see Solé, *Bonaparte*, 88.

tion was very plausible to say the least: The Corsican general actually seemed convinced that the continental divide between Europe, Asia, and Africa could be bridged by melting into one unique space the ideal and material "civilizational" achievements that for millennia had been handed down from the east to the west. Now that the new home of human intelligence, the French Republic, was re-exporting the progress of the human mind from the west to the east, Napoleon envisaged the possibility of condensing the various temporal layers of "civilization" into one single French-dominated space. This was what the "Mediterranean World" was mainly meant to be. In the self-pleasant eyes of a conqueror who had descended from a ship named *L'Orient* not by chance, it was thought to be inclusive enough to even embrace the Mediterranean Other.

2 Engineers, Philosophers, and the Geographical Mind

Among the purposes behind the French invasion of Egypt and Syria we find the more practical flipsides of Clio's supposed imperatives, namely the dream of making "the Mediterranean a French lake and of opening a route to India via the Red Sea, and recovering Pondicherry and other French possessions on the Coromandel and Malabar coasts."[40] While most of the other variables in the equation would remain exactly the same, over the following decades North and West Africa and the Levant would replace India on the French priority list of territories against which the effort to cross, unite, and "widen" the Mediterranean was most urgently directed. As Maurizio Isabella and Konstantina Zanou have noted, the Mediterranean was "reimagined as a geographical and civilizational space," in ways "that would put the Mediterranean back again at the centre stage of the world after a long decline: the commercial exchanges facilitated by the opening of the Suez Canal and the railway networks along its coasts would connect it to global links and the sea would become once again, as it had been in Antiquity, the cradle of modern civilization."[41] French thought remained the driver of this Mediterranean project, which, however, inspired intellectuals from other countries as well.

After the conclusion of the Congress of Vienna in 1815, restored Bourbon France as well as its internal liberal forces remained conditioned, each in their own ways, by a new European security framework dominated in particular by

40 Cole, *Napoleon's Egypt*, 14.

41 Maurizio Isabella and Konstantina Zanou, editors' introduction to *Mediterranean Diasporas. Politics and Ideas in the Long 19th Century* (Bloomsbury, 2016), 9.

Great Britain, Russia, and Austria, whose power and influence in the Mediterranean were growing as well. This new diplomatic framework tended to otherize the Ottoman Empire, as Western powers were subtly or openly implying that the shrinkage or dismantling of that empire was the best solution for what they would call the "oriental question." The other option, favored by the British, was to keep it in place and in check under European control, whereas its recognition on equal foot was not really contemplated.

The basic structure of the related argument consisted of linking the inner constitution of a country with the legitimacy of its external relations, in accordance with what Enlightenment thinkers like Montesquieu and de Vattel had suggested. This pattern would not be changed by Napoleon's defeat and the arrangements of the Congress of Vienna, which neither fully reversed the results of the French Revolution nor fully restored the Munster principles of recognition of other states' sovereign legitimacy, independently from their inner constitution. Revolutionary and Republican France, when moving war on "despots" and "tyrants" supposedly in favor of their suffering subjects, had "moralized," that is, essentially suspended, international law and self-righteously placed themselves in the position of the greater "good," laying the ideological and sentimental groundwork of modern imperialism.[42] The Viennese European security system was likewise politicized and hierarchically ordered, although it was multipolar instead of Paris-centered; and on the continent it was led by neo-absolutist, anti-republican, and anti-constitutional political principles rather than the liberal and constitutional ones professed by Napoleon. At any rate, although under conservative and "moderate liberal" British hegemony, it was no societal restoration of the *ancient regime*, "as peacemaking at the end of the Napoleonic Wars brought onto the international scene new agents including financiers, rentiers and bankers, funding the future of Europe. Their presence reflected the emergence of a new capitalist economic order buttressed by industrialization and imperialism."[43]

One of the habitual western European bogeys, "despotic Russia," earned some decades of respite from being part of an arrangement that was ideologically backed by the Holy Alliance, even if the inclusion of the Tsar among the European strongmen triggered more anti-Russian resentment among the

42 Giovanni Amadori Virgilj, *Il sentimento imperialista. Studio psico-sociologico* (Sandron, 1906).

43 Beatrice de Graaf, Ido de Haan and Brian Vick, "Vienna 1815: Introducing a European Security Culture," in *Securing Europe after Napoleon: 1815 and the New European Security Culture,* ed. Beatrice de Graaf et al. (Cambridge University Press, 2019), 16.

nationalist, republican, and liberal sections of public opinion.[44] The other traditional European bogey, the Ottoman Empire, did not get much respite, as the siding not only of liberal and philhellenic movements in western Europe, and neo-byzantine and Orthodox forces in eastern Europe, but even of the (initially hesitant) neo-absolutist regimes with the Greek Insurrection would show. In short, the weakening of the Ottoman Empire on multiple fronts was a general tendency, and it was of obvious importance for the Mediterranean scenario.

Egypt remained a major bone of contention. After the 1802 Treaty of Amiens, which formally settled the Egyptian and Maltese "questions," France kept a foot in the Egyptian door by first maintaining relations with Mamluk leaders, then establishing contacts with the Albanian-Ottoman officer Mehmet Ali (Muḥammad 'Alī), who emerged from the Egyptian intestine struggles as the new strongman.[45] Mehmet Ali—who in 1805 was confirmed *wālī* of Egypt and in 1840, after his failed attempt to achieve full Egyptian independence, would nonetheless remain hereditary Ottoman Viceroy under a slightly reinforced Ottoman supervision—was interested in maintaining good relations with France as he considered its economic statism more functional for his own objectives of military and industrial advancement than the British free-trade policy.

The Political Groundwork of Practical Region-Building

During the Restoration, French liberals "added new principles that, in their view, accounted for French and European supremacy, namely industriousness (or *industrie*, a quality attached to the productive, anti-feudal forces of society), constitutional rights and civic virtues." Maurizio Isabella continues by stating that in the 1820s the followers of Claude-Henri de Saint-Simon "embarked upon an intensive course of study of the Mediterranean as a new frontier of civilization and progress, and displayed a marked fascination with Oriental culture."[46] New was the emphasis laid on the prospects of social change being obtained thanks to the enhancement of productivity through infrastruc-

44 Of particular propagandistic effect were the fake *mémoires secrets, écrits de la main de Pierre Ier*, which in 1797 had been handed in to the French Directory by Polish General Michał Sokòlnicki and were for the first time used in a book that prepared Napoleon's Russian campaign: Charles-Louis Lesur, *Des progrès de la puissance russe* (Fantin, 1812), 176–79.

45 Rutledge, *Sea of Troubles*, 159–62.

46 Maurizio Isabella, "Liberalism and Empire in the Mediterranean: The View-Point of the Risorgimento," in *The Risorgimento Revisited. Nationalism and Culture in Nineteenth Century Italy*, ed. Silvana Patriarca and Lucy Riall (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 235.

ture and technical innovation. This ambitious program was put forth by a union of engineers, workers, industrialists, and bureaucrats to overcome rentier capitalism and feudal residuals. It was also an early blueprint for the recruitment of the labor movement in support of colonial projects, which at a more mature stage of industrialization would become a frequent feature of imperialism. The rekindled semantics of Ferguson's "civilization" in the industrial age did neither abandon the concept itself nor the underlying teleology and space hierarchies. On the contrary, it emphasized the "modernizing" and "progressive" agency of colonialism, legitimizing it with the meaning and purpose of history.

In 1833, some 40 among the French followers of Saint-Simon, after passing some through Constantinople, others through Syria, headed to Egypt once again for a mission, this time unarmed, but likewise meant to make civilization return to the East.[47] They were led by Barthélemy-Prosper Enfantin, the future co-founder of the Société d'Études du Canal de Suez. The initiative, driven by a mixture of financial and technological pragmatism and "a mysticism shaped by Christian symbolism," failed to convince Mehmet Ali to proceed with the immediate implementation of a Suez Canal or a railway across the isthmus but was more successful in giving inputs for hydraulic and melioration works, public health, and education.[48] The expedition "was a child of the 'oriental myth' that formed from the very vivid memory of Bonaparte's expedition and the reports of his scientific entourage as well as from the travelogues from the East by early Romanticism, represented by Chateaubriand and Lamartine."[49] On August 15, 1835, "French and Egyptians celebrate[d] the anniversary of Napoleon's birth with the laying of the foundation stone of the engineering school. Utopia, in short, seem[ed] to be on the move."[50]

Another Saint-Simonian, Émile Barrault, a future Republican representative for French Algeria from 1849 to 1851, in the mid-1830s authored two books regarding the "encounter" of West and East.[51] He wrote that "there are,

47 Pamela Pilbeam, *Saint-Simonians in Nineteenth-Century France: From Free Love to Algeria* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 104–29.

48 Quotation drawn from Wolf Lepenies, *Die Macht am Mittelmeer. Französische Träume von einem anderen Europa* (Hanser, 2016), 109; see also Philippe Régnier, "Les saint-simoniens en Égypte, une singulière expérience de coopération," in *Le mouvement saint-simonien de Sorèze à L'Égypte*, ed. Rémy Cazals (Éditions midi-pyrénéennes, 2012), 123–24.

49 Michel Levallois, "Les saint-simoniens en Égypte," *Bulletin de la Sabix* 54, no. 43 (2014), accessed April 8, 2021, http://journals.openedition.org/sabix/1110.

50 Régnier, "Les saint-simoniens en Égypte," 124.

51 Émile Barrault, *Orient et Occident. Études politiques, morales, religieuses pendant 1833–1834 de l'ère chrétienne, 1249–1250 de l'hégyre* (Desessart et Pougin, 1835) and *Guerre ou paix en Orient* (Desessart-Baillière, 1836).

in Napoleon's words, two great nations in the old world, the East and the West. Now that the alliance of France and England strongly constitutes the unity of the West, what is the most serious question in politics? The union of the West and the East."[52] Progress turned to the East, but of course Barrault implied a return under French guidance.

Michel Chevalier, editor-in-chief of the Saint-Simonian periodical *Le Globe*, translated the ideals expressed by Barrault "into a real system of exchange and international trade," with the same declared intent to contribute to perpetual peace between Orient and Occident.[53] By drawing his "Mediterranean map, including the whole of Europe, part of Africa and of Asia," Chevalier proposed that the coming European railway networks should extend to Constantinople, which should be connected with Aleppo and the Levant, Baghdad and Teheran, and the Persian Gulf, on the other side.[54]

> Now let us imagine that we continue a similar system of works on the coast of Africa, all along the Barbary regencies, to Ceuta; and that we trace, for example, a railway from the island of Elephantine down to that of Alexandria, and that by branching one links the oases of Egypt with the valley of the Nile; we will thus have all around the Mediterranean a first network on which we will embroider secondary networks, in a way above all to make converge the communications towards the ports which will serve as centre for each basin.[55]

Chevalier then described how the Mediterranean networks, to be financed through the repudiation of war and rearmament, would be linked with global trade routes.[56] The future "Mediterranean Confederation" would sit at the heart of all these connections. Imagine, he wrote, "the immense development that industry would take on the very day that a congress would have laid the foundations of this confederation."[57]

Unfortunately, in Barrault's eyes, many obstacles had to be removed, as the Orient still languished in atavist backwardness. There lived, "on the same ter-

52 Barrault, *Orient et Occident*, 1.

53 Deborah Paci, "The Saint-Simonian vision of the Mediterranean," in *Mediterranean Europe(s): Rethinking Europe from its Southern Shores,* ed. Matthew D'Auria and Fernanda Gallo (Routledge, 2023), 29; also, Barrault, *Orient et Occident*, 240.

54 Michel Chevalier, *Politique industrielle et système de la Méditerranée: religion Saint-Simonienne* (Impr. d'Éverat, 1832), 24.

55 Chevalier, *Politique industrielle*, 144–45.

56 Pierre Musso, "L'Europe chez Saint-Simon, Michel Chevalier et Charles Lemonnier," in *Le mouvement saint-simonien de Sorèze à L'Égypte*, ed. Rémy Cazals (Éditions midi-pyrénéennes, 2012), 135.

57 Chevalier, *Politique industrielle*, 148.

ritory, diverse races, numerous, encamped, in unsteadiness. Populations without nationality, in juxtaposition and not in society."[58] Disharmony and heterogeneity, he implied, were the result of several waves of nomadic conquest. These layers of history condemned the eastern empire to live on conquest forever, according to Barrault's projection of his own country's behavior. In his view, only the unitarian homogeneity of a modern nation could heal such wrongs. "Now that the East wants to assimilate European civilization, it is by helping, without parsimony, this noble will and this imperious need that France will unswervingly establish its credit there. Engineers, professors, doctors, workshop foremen, in a word, every type of peaceful instructor: this is its most popular, most powerful and most fruitful external representation."[59]

When Barrault wrote these words, the conquest of Algiers lay just a few years behind while the brutal repression of local resistance was still raging, and the further penetration of the hinterland was in full swing. But in the average French perception the red of bloodshed bleached in the sight of "Human Progress," which was depicted as being worthy of sacrifice and could be easily associated with "peace" in the eyes of an assuaged domestic audience. The alternation between brutal massacre and magniloquent rhetoric had already been a hallmark of Napoleon's expedition. The figure of speech according to which the Orient was literally pleading for Europe's "help" to further its own march into the bright future of progress would be used over and again, for example to prepare the French public for the occupation of Tunis and Morocco, as we will see in the next chapter.

Barrault placed his emphasis on a "pacifist perspective."[60] That for this emphasis he had additional motives is suggested by remarks like the following: "However jealous England and Russia may be in the region that they affect and dispute, France will everywhere have, with each of them, the benefit of her moderation. Without material pretensions on this portion of the territory – does it not have its magnificent colony of Algiers? – without views hostile to Russia and England, it does not arouse either alarm or distrust."[61] In the 1830s, France was still under the scrutiny of the leading great powers, which after their victory had readmitted it in 1815 to the concert of European powers by a well-calculated clemency. In a similar environment it could appear wiser to signal that with Algiers France for the moment it had had its share, and would

58 Barrault, *Orient et Occident*, 3–4.

59 Barrault, *Orient et Occident*, 240.

60 Paola Cattani, "Europe or the Mediterranean? Paul Valéry and the French debate of the 1930s," in *Mediterranean Europe(s): Rethinking Europe from its Southern Shores,* ed. Matthew D'Auria and Fernanda Gallo (Routledge, 2023), 139.

61 Barrault, *Orient et Occident*, 241.

not interfere with other "peaceful" attempts, say by Britain or Russia, to cut their own slices off the Ottoman cake.

Several French intellectuals considered the conquest of the "magnificent colony of Algiers" a veritable loss of time and money, looking instead with more interest to the Levant. Some of them made remarks on the Vilâyet of Syria meant to be commendatory, like those by Alphonse de Lamartine, who magnanimously noted that the "Greek, Syrian and Arab families of farmers who live in the houses at the foot of Mount Lebanon have nothing wild or barbaric."[62] In 1840, when the Second Egyptian-Ottoman War was raging in Syria to end Egyptian rule over the province conquered by Mehmet Ali's son Ibrāhīm in 1831–32, Lamartine criticized the French government for its behavior during the First Egyptian-Ottoman War. French passivity had left the anti-Ottoman stances in the Greater Syrian arena to Mehmet Ali while France was waging "endless and aimless wars in Algiers." France preferred "to suffocate in Europe to taking up space in the East; isolate France to allying it; fortify Paris to broadening French action in the Levant."[63] However, under British deterrence and for the sake of European and Mediterranean equilibria, the Levant was suspended from the French priority list of direct conquest. Yet it was not forgotten.

Between 1838 and 1842, Adolphe Blanqui, a liberal close to François Guizot, whose faction emerged during the July Monarchy, undertook various research missions into Mediterranean islands and coastal regions on behalf of the *Académie des sciences morales et politiques*. His propositions

> ranged from a reflection on the colonization of Algeria and a comparison with the British model, to an analysis of the social, cultural and religious archaisms that limited the modernization of the whole of the Mediterranean. A reflection that united the "new" gaze of the sociologist with that of the economist, as for Blanqui the key to balance had to be found in the progress of liberal society, in the liberalization of trade but also in the emancipation of individuals.[64]

Blanqui's reports compose a comprehensive picture of Mediterranean backwardness that also comprised Corsica and parts of Italy, and which the growing influence of liberal powers such as France and Great Britain were called to

62 Alphonse de Lamartine, *Voyage en Orient* [1835], vol. 1 (Hachette, 1913), 432.

63 Alphonse de Lamartine, *Vues, discours et articles sur la question d'Orient* (Gosselin/Furne, 1840), 20–21.

64 Elena Musiani, "Dall'Italia all'Impero Ottomano. I viaggi nel Mediterraneo di un economista liberale," *Memoria e Ricerca* 64, no. 2 (2020): 386.

help to overcome, mainly through the establishment of free trade and modern private property, still hampered in Blanqui's view by the persistence of traditional familial and communitarian structures, feudal privilege, a lack of juridical institutions, and the oppression of women. Blanqui was more of a liberal free trader, and more skeptical than the Saint-Simonians regarding state intervention and regulation. In theory he was skeptical even regarding colonialism, except for recommending for the newly colonized Algeria the introduction of a plantation economy.[65]

Since the days of the Restoration, with the insurrection of Cadiz and the Greek War of Independence, the Mediterranean had become a major launchpad for the forming European liberal movement and its transnational connections, ideological and political articulations, and national and Mediterranean projects. French figures like Chevalier first, then Blanqui, were part of this broader political environment, interconnected but also divided by ideological, national, and personal differences—for example over questions of empire, Orient, Islam, colonization, and many other issues. Spanish, Italian, and Greek liberals, who in many circumstances cooperated with each other, partly feared a French hegemony looking at Great Britain as the better civilizer.[66]

Britain's commercial and diplomatic penetration and its ubiquitous Royal Navy, its political intervention in strategic spots like Sicily,[67] its protectorate over the United States of the Ionian Islands, and later over Cyprus, and its strategic footholds in Gibraltar and Malta; French attempts at colonial conquest, both unsuccessful (Egypt, 1798) and successful (Algiers, 1830; Tunis, 1881); Austrian and Russian commercial, military, and political moves in the Balkans and the Caucasus to the detriment of the Ottomans; a renewed "war against piracy" with American participation and new regulations put in place by the Congress of Vienna; Western economic and political penetration in North Africa and the Levant; the spread of Freemasonry and international liberal friendship and solidarity, from *Trienio Liberal* (1820–23) in Spain and

65 Musiani, "Dall'Italia all'Impero Ottomano," 386–88.

66 See, among others, Antoine Picon, *Les Saint-Simoniens. Raison, imaginaire et utopie* (Belin, 2002); Gilles Pécout, "Philhellenism as a Political Friendship: Italian volunteers in XIXth century Mediterranean," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 9, no. 4 (2004): 405–23; Philippe Régnier, ed., *Le Siècle des saint-simoniens. Du Nouveau Christianisme au canal de Suez* (BNF, 2006); Pilbeam, *Saint-Simonians in Nineteenth-Century France;* Isabella and Zanou, eds., *Mediterranean Diasporas*; Konstantina Zanou, *Transnational Patriotism in the Mediterranean, 1800–1850. Stammering the Nation* (Oxford University Press, 2018).

67 Angelo Grimaldi, "La Costituzione siciliana del 1812," *Rivista de Derecho. Universidad del Norte* 48 (2017): 208–233; John Rosselli, *Lord William Bentinck and the British Occupation of Sicily 1811–14* (Cambridge University Press, 1956).

Ελληνική Επανάσταση (1821–29) in Greece, to national movements in the Balkans and the emergence, in the following decades, of the Italian *Risorgimento* as well as the *Tanzimāt* efforts in the Ottoman Empire after 1839—all these were, together with the great technical advancements in the realm of transport and communication, the most important elements of practical region building.

Common to European diagnoses of Mediterranean affairs was the centrality of the progress-backwardness paradigm, even if how and where it would apply and how backwardness should be overcome were often disputed. In regard to the necessity of dismantling the Ottoman Empire, if most European liberals had few doubts, their approaches nonetheless differed. While the Saint-Simonians kept faith with older French intellectual developments holding "the encounter and merging of the two cultures [Christianity and Islam] to be crucial to the advancement of civilization," Italian, Austrian, and other liberals tended more easily to equate Islam with barbarity.[68]

The external European view of Spain oscillated between what later was called the *leyanda negra* regarding the cruel epiphenomena of the Reconquista and Inquisition on the one hand, and the Romantics' yearning for genuine Spanish passion, beauty, and heroism on the other.[69] It mostly oscillated between the repudiation and the admiration of what was considered the traditionalist foundation of Spanish society. Republicans and liberals grew impatient, not only in the Spanish case, with the reluctance of "passive and superstitious populations" to join their political and constitutional projects, sometimes concluding that the "majority of the population [is] unsuited to the exercise of political rights."[70] A sort of benevolent dictate was therefore envisaged, for example by the Italian Giambattista Marochetti, who "proposed to integrate the Mediterranean into the civilizing process by calling for the colonization by France and Great Britain of islands like Sardinia, Cyprus, Malta and Crete."[71]

68 Quotation drawn from Isabella, "Liberalism and Empire," 240.

69 Martin Baumeister, "Diesseits von Afrika? Konzepte des europäischen Südens," in *Der Süden. Neue Perspektiven auf eine europäische Geschichtsregion*, ed. Frithjof Benjamin and Martina Winkler (Campus, 2007), 38–41.

70 Gregoire Bron, "Learning lessons from the Iberian Peninsula: Italian exiles and the making of a Risorgimento without people, 1820–48," in *Mediterranean Diasporas. Politics and Ideas in the Long 19th Century*, ed. Maurizio Isabella and Konstantina Zanou (Bloomsbury, 2016), 62.

71 Isabella, "Liberalism and Empire," 236.

The Poetic Groundwork of Sentimental Region-Building

Against the backdrop of similar discourses, a new variant of Mediterraneanness emerged, together with a new understanding of the south as the minus pole of another space axis of progress. The first of these imaginative axes had been invented in the eighteenth century to go "down" from the west to the east, whereby the new "idea of eastern Europe was entangled with evolving Orientalism."[72] In the nineteenth century, "southern Europe," which largely coincided with "Mediterranean Europe," was also increasingly depicted as backward and anachronistic. Rurality, religiosity, superstition, honor, familism, vendetta, clientelism, machismo, and so on could also be interpreted as hybrid oriental remains from the breeding period of Western civilization or as the result of a Byzantine relapse.[73] The "encounter" between "Orient and Occident" appeared to have left pockets of marginality, lethargy, and inaptitude that had tainted even the Western presence in the "Mediterranean World."

But this theorized hybridity was not always seen as a deficit. On the contrary, there were romantic admirers of that "world" who would have been disgusted at the sight of Chevalier's railroads cutting through vineyards and olive groves. An important share in the representation of the Mediterranean among the educated public of North-West Europe was held by traveler-writers, such as Goethe, Chateaubriand, Shelly, Byron, Dickens, Flaubert, Lamartine, and others. The Romantics among them were attracted by "the picturesque as a way of living removed from modern civilization," a condition seen as the enjoyable flipside of backwardness.[74] These writers depicted the brightness, spontaneity, and warmth of the Mediterranean as a space of freedom in the sense of Rousseau's nostalgia for lost paradise, which accompanied in much of European culture the industrial and urban "destruction of nature" with a bittersweet aftertaste. It was a bourgeoise aftertaste that began to drive the tourist business, which sold to affluent nostalgic travelers also the experience of wilderness in the woods and offered lonely self-finding on top of impervious mountains.[75] Likewise, the "appreciation of the sublime of the Mediterranean

72 Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford University Press, 1994), 7.

73 Karl Kaser, "Fernand Braudels Mittelmeerwelten: Eine historisch-anthropologische Perspektive," in *Der Süden. Neue Perspektiven auf eine europäische Geschichtsregion*, ed. Frithjof Benjamin Schenk and Martina Winkler (Campus, 2007), 84–94.

74 José Enrique Ruiz-Domènec, "Romantic Visions of the Mediterranean," *Quaderns de la Mediterrània*, 24 (2017): 54.

75 David Vincent, *A History of Solitude* (Polity Press, 2020), 35–68.

landscape was put within the reach of all readers of the tourist guides or those who bought their journey through agencies such as Thomas Cook."[76]

New transport and communication technologies certainly intensified the trade as well as cultural and political exchange across borders, but we can see how even the practical, mainly action-oriented, and interest-driven making of a Mediterranean region was never detached from its poetic invention. Whether a progressive engineer was writing or a romantic poet reciting, the fundamental axioms of modern contract theory and Enlightenment philosophy of history, summed up by the purported progress-backwardness slope and tropes such as "barbarity" and "savagery," and a neologism like "civilization," were ubiquitously present. The same discursive elements accompanied European political action both in the Napoleonic and post-Napoleonic era. Still, these same elements were applied by European colonizers around the globe to make sense of space and time, and present their action as being in compliance with those axioms. As such, they were not specific enough to complete the theoretical corpus of the "Mediterranean World."

The Academic Groundwork of Theoretical Region-Building

Yet this corpus was also already in the making in a parallel process. Whenever in the early nineteenth century it came to theory or, say, philosophy and geography, German scholars were not far away. Many Germans were present in the Mediterranean area as diplomats, merchants, artisans, bankers, ship owners, seamen, workers, mercenaries, political militants, artists, and scholars, but the fragmented German statecraft and military power of the time was dwarfed by the presence of other European powers. The multinational Habsburg Monarchy under Austro-Hungarian hegemony was the only "German" state that thanks to its ports at Trieste and Fiume-Rijeka could nourish maritime ambitions in the Mediterranean. But the gravitational fields of the Vienna government's mental maps were occupied by "central Europe." Looking from there to the outside, Trieste was seen as their maritime gateway to the world rather than just the Mediterranean, although Adriatic and Mediterranean interests were also formulated, and military actions to contrast piracy put forth.[77] Trieste's local cosmopolitan elites were increasingly dragged into national dis-

76 Ruiz-Domènec, "Romantic Visions," 54.

77 Heinrich von Costa, *Der Freihafen von Triest. Österreichs Hauptstapelplatz für den überseeischen Welthandel* (Mechitaristen-Congregations-Buchdruckerei, 1838), 84, 138–39, 156.

putes, in particular between Italians and Slavs.[78] On the whole, the German contribution to the making of a "Mediterranean World" in the early nineteenth century was therefore, once again, prevalently a contribution of "philosophical contemporaries," as Marx would gibe. Yet it was, on all counts, a relevant one.

If we look back from a greater distance, we can appreciate its importance even more. Braudel's works, which in the second half of the twentieth century would become the most widely known monument of the "Mediterranean World," would also build on it. This includes, in particular, his "geohistorical" approach of regionalizing historical developments, seen as a heuristic necessity because "civilizations *are* regions, zones" that "both confine man and undergo constant change through his effort."[79] In the ancient Mediterranean area, at the confluence of three continents, physical conditions imposed on humans both cultural encounter and hybridization, provoking a spatial transmission of civilization from the East to the West. Under these very specific geographical conditions, the Mediterranean became a region of outstanding significance for the entire human race and, to a certain extent, the place of its youth, as well as the origin of universal history. From there, modernity would spread out to widen the boundaries of the Mediterranean, expanding its paradigm across the globe. These and other familiar-sounding common places of the "Mediterranean World," which are so easily associated with Fernand Braudel's name, had already been worked out by geographers and philosophers of the early nineteenth century.

Of course, those scholars also had predecessors themselves. As we have seen in the foregoing chapters, geography, cartography, and other fields of knowledge regarding the earth's surface had been a subject of numerous treatises, and were even taught in universities, long before geography became a distinct academic discipline. In 1700, Pietro Rosa proposed a system of scientific distinction between oceanography, cosmography, topography, geometry, and chorography, defining geography as an "impure" branch of mathematics, thus clearly leaning towards "physical" geography.[80] This was to become one branch of geography.

The early-modern predecessors of the upcoming "human" geography, who would dominate the academic discipline in the nineteenth century, had vary-

78 Marina Cattaruzza, *Trieste nell'Ottocento: le trasformazioni di una società civile* (Del Bianco, 1995), 123.

79 Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, vol. 2, 773, the emphasis is mine; in the French original it reads *espaces*, instead of "regions" in the authorized English translation curated by Siân Reynolds.

80 Rosa, *La nautica rilucente*, 1.

ing intellectual backgrounds. Some were just interested writers, seafarers, businessmen or travelers, others officially appointed maritime cartographers or cosmographers like Coronelli, others still anthropologists or philosophers, while Büsching, for example, was a theologist. Like Büsching, during the Enlightenment, other authors, such as Montesquieu and Voltaire, were interested in the intellectual elaboration of human differences and their interplay in space and time.[81] As for the Mediterranean, Vico had characterized it as a place where Western and Eastern "languages were mixed with the transmigration of the peoples" and claimed for it a primordial role. He maintained that Assyria, which was among the earliest known manifestations of statehood and polity, was "the most Mediterranean monarchy of the whole habitable world" before the emergence of the "classical" world. He also specified that "without any doubt, Universal History takes its beginning from the Assyrian Monarchy."[82] Vico's was another important precedent for the association of the "Mediterranean World" with universal history and the transmission of "civility" from the East to the West.

In nineteenth-century geography, as happened with other fields of knowledge, geography became a distinct academic discipline to make it "appear as the logical result of Science vanquishing fantasy and Reason triumphing over superstition."[83] At its very inception, German geographers such as August Zeune, Carl Ritter, and Alexander von Humboldt were able to exert far-reaching influence. But the role of philosophers like Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel was still very important and should not be neglected either. Early academic geography was indeed "philosophical geography" as well as a kind of "geophilosophy of history." Unambiguously, Hegel spoke of the "geographical basis of world history." Geographical differences, according to his reflection, provide different degrees of possibility "from which the spirit can emerge." Such physical determinants of collective imaginary are a necessary condition but not a sufficient one. Still, the necessity of their presence is peremptory: "The soil of world-historical peoples neither can be in the cold nor in the hot

81 On Enlightenment geography, see D'Auria, "Protean boundaries," 33–34; Charles W.J. Withers, *Placing the Enlightenment: Thinking Geographically about the Age of Reason* (University of Chicago Press, 2007); Rolando Minuti, "Milieu naturel et sociétés politiques: réflexions sur un thème de Montesquieu," in *Le temps de Montesquieu*, ed. Michel Porret and Catherine Volpilhac-Auger (Librairie Droz, 2002), 223–44; David N. Livingstone and Charles W.J. Withers, eds., *Geography and the Enlightenment* (University of Chicago Press, 1999).

82 Vico, *Principj di Scienza Nuova*, 86, 118.

83 Gregory and Castree, editors' introduction to *Human Geography*, xxvii.

zone."[84] For similar reasons, Humboldt, against the terminological canon, extended the concept of "physical geography" to include "the knowledge of the various races of humans and the geographical distribution of animals and plants," because he also saw an indissoluble nexus between geographical conditions and at least the generic characteristics of human groups, then called "races" or "peoples," later "cultures" and "civilizations," and after 1945 also "ethnicities."[85]

Carl Ritter maintained that geography in its most comprehensive sense could not be anything other than human geography, as it "regards the Earth as the dwelling-place of Man." He also maintained that from "a geographical point of view, the whole animate and inanimate creation is tributary to the fashioning of the destiny of Man." Therefore, the study of geography "is at the foundation of history as much as of physics."[86] The way he defined the relationship between geography and history made it clear how he saw the Enlightenment philosophy of history as the basis of both. He indeed maintained that

> the mighty influence of Time on the geographical development of the earth is displayed in the clearest manner. But this influence is not the same for all localities of the globe. While there are some peoples and some places which are left behind, there are others which have made wonderful progress, and have taken and now hold a foremost place. And such a position is that of Europe at the present moment. Europe, the most central of all continents, (…) touches the whole remaining world at the greatest number of points (…).[87]

Ritter proposed to study the earth according to a "principle of organic unity that pervades the whole, and the mutual play and interdependency of all the parts," treating his object as "almost a living thing – not a crystal, assuming new grace by virtue of an external law, but a *world*, taking on grandeur and worth by virtue of an inward necessity."[88] On the basis of similar considerations, he looked at regions in terms of space individuals in which "nature and nurture" merge into an indissoluble geographical unity. Of Hindustan, for

84 Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte* (Duncker und Humblot, 1837), 75.

85 Quotations from Alexander von Humboldt, *Kritische Untersuchungen über die historische Entwickelung der geographischen Kenntnisse von der Neuen Welt*, I [1833] (Nicolai'sche Buchhandlung, 1852), 27; on post-1945 uses of "ethnicity," see Alana Lentin and Gavan Titley, *The Crisis of Multiculturalism: Racism in a Neoliberal Age* (Zed Books, 2011), 70–77.

86 Carl Ritter, *Comparative Geography* (Blackwood, 1865), 8–9.

87 Ritter, *Comparative Geography*, 64.

88 Ritter, *Comparative Geography*, 10, 18; the emphasis is mine.

example, he would write that "the universal and individual development of what is particular and common of its natural and cultural conditions constitutes, however, a very characteristic peculiarity of this harmoniously connected region of the earth [*Erdgebiet*] and its inhabitants."[89] This concept, and his own remarks regarding North Africa as Mediterranean rather that African, made a *Mittelmeergebiet* entirely plausible.[90]

What was the characteristic peculiarity of the Mediterranean *Erdgebiet*? The "deep-bone structure" of the Mediterranean, according to Braudel, is shaped by geography that compels people to connect, exchange goods and ideas, and tackle the perennial divide between the West and the East. For Hegel, similarly, Mediterranean geography shaped the "elements of Greek spirit":

> Greece is the substance, which is at the same time individual: the general as such has been overcome, immersion in nature is given up, and so is at the same time the dimension of mass, which immediately vanishes due to geography. The country consists of a soil, which is scattered in many ways in the sea, a multitude of islands and a mainland that is itself island-like (…). We do not find here this physical power of the Orient, no large rivers like the Ganges, Indus, Euphrates and Tigris, etc., through which the people would be bound to each other in a uniform way. Rather we find those distributions and diversity which so perfectly correspond to the manifold nature of the Greek peoples and the mobility of the Greek spirit.[91]

The "spirit of the individual," as an expression of human emancipation from the dictate of nature and superstition, was thus generated to a non-neglectable degree by geographic conditions diverse from those of the Orient: "Asia precedes Greece, and the latter turns against the former both in its political power and ideas. State, family, law, religion is here also the purpose of individuality, which only through these ends becomes what it is."[92] Similar geophilosophical conjectures, or should we say philosophical speculations, regarding geography would then be worked into the "deep-bone structure" of "Mediterranean civilization" and partly extended to the concept of "Europe" and "the West" as a

89 Carl Ritter, *Die Erdkunde im Verhältniß zur Natur*, vol. 1, 801.

90 Yaacov Shavit, "The Mediterranean World and 'Mediterraneanism': The Origins, Meaning, and Application of a Geo-Cultural Notion in Israel," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 3, no. 2 (1988): 102–103.

91 Hegel, *Vorlesungen*, 234.

92 Hegel, *Vorlesungen*, 233.

whole.[93] "With Asia, the Orient," Ritter wrote, "is connected indissolubly the development of the ancient world; with Europe, that of the modern."[94]

The Mediterranean, according to Hegel's and Ritter's narrative, is therefore the scenery of the original encounter "between the East and the West," be that because of the Eastern primordial sources of Greek mythology and deity, or because of the confrontation between the Greek poleis and "Asia," in particular the Persian Empire. According to the narrative, those and other moments of encounter, division, and hybridization have given rise to a founding epoch of universal history breeding in and around the Archipelago a "Western civilization" inspired by ideas of individuality and freedom, which was also the first and only one that could lay claim to represent universal humanity. Here in the Mediterranean, Hegel remarks in his lecture manuscripts, "takes place the adolescence of History" (*hier ist das Jünglingsalter der Geschichte*).[95] The Mediterranean is the place, as the Austrian liberal Franz Schuselka would confirm, "where humanity lived its most beautiful and vigorous youth."[96]

Another founding text of German geography, *Gea* by August Zeune, of 1811, is likewise elucidating. Zeune's "attempt to describe the Earth" is tainted by mythology. Asia Minor, which was the country that the Greeks mainly referred to when saying "Asia," is circumscribed in the following terms: "The whole country is a peninsula, separated to the east by the Taurus (…) from the rest of Asia, and, by the original sources of the Mediterranean, from Europe."[97] The first observation refers to the qualification of the Mediterranean as the "original sources," which in the German wording *die Urquellen des Mittelmeeres* sounds even more powerful, and makes it clear how those primordial fonts do not just fill that bay of an ocean with water molecules and dissolved sodium and chloride ions, but that the Mediterranean is itself the elemental source. Source of what? The reference to the "everything" of universal history was perhaps considered by Zeune too redundant to be even mentioned.

Another interesting aspect relates to Braudel's sentence according to which the "continental masses" hold "the inland sea in their grip."[98] With the modern reprisal of "Europe" since the fifteenth century, the mythologically founded

93 See, for example, the conception of Europe as an archipelago in Massimo Cacciari, *L'Arcipelago* (Adelphi, 1997), 21.

94 Ritter, *Comparative Geography*, 52.

95 Hegel, *Vorlesungen*, 232.

96 Franz Schuselka, *Mittelmeer, Ost- und Nordsee* (Weidmann'sche Buchhandlung, 1845), 195.

97 August Zeune, *Gea. Versuch einer wissenschaftlichen Erdbeschreibung* (Wittich, 1811), 207–208.

98 Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, vol. 2, 1239.

denomination of mainland divisions around the Archipelago, such as continental Greece and Anatolia—that is, "Europe and Asia"—was definitely projected from a Eurocentric perspective onto much vaster landmasses and inflated until they filled the spaces of the "continents" by a geographic definition that we learn from our schoolbooks today. It was as if the Hellespont of the ancient Greek-speaking world were the vertex of an inverted cone through which the fundamental divisions of mankind, marked by a small strait of water, would enlarge, and spread out into the space and time of universal history. By attaching to each of these divisions a specific purpose and meaning, for modern philosophers the landmasses acquired the character of space individuals that were bearing all the weight of universal history on their shoulders. They expressed their world-historical meanings by taking the Middle Sea "in their grip." So, we see how Zeune's "description" was a moment of narrative spinning that made the line between philosophical geography and geophilosophy blur: the "geographic conditions" that supposedly contributed to the shaping of customs, beliefs, mindset, "national character," and so on were in fact already a product of philosophical speculation themselves. For that reason, Europe and Asia could not just be separated by a strait of water but had to be torn apart by the *Urquellen des Mittelmeeres*.

Europe and Asia were attributed to a sort of perennial character, made of a substance that conflated geographic conditions with the "spirit" of their inhabitants, formed by the interaction with these conditions. Africa, according to Hegel, no less possessed (or was possessed by) such a deep-bone structure, distinguished by magic, superstition, "naturalness, wild sensuality with African hardness, animal veneration, enjoyment of life."[99] However, in 1811, in accordance with Büsching, German philosopher Karl Friedrich Krause underlined that "at least a part of the North African coast has to be considered Europe from a physical and ethnographical point of view. Africa in its proper meaning lies beyond the Saharan desert."[100]

Krause's Europeanization of the African shores imported Büsching's geographical nomenclature into the building process of the "Mediterranean World." It inaugurated an intellectual development that would contribute, for example, to Herre's conclusion, according to which the former Roman Province of Africa, together with North Africa as a whole, "is, in its character, totally un-African." The very *Africa* erected after the Third Punic War was deemed "un-African" because right here the assault of an "unspiritual and barbaric" semitic people against "the future of the Indo-German substance" had

99 Hegel, *Vorlesungen*, 227.
100 Krause, *Aphorismen*, 23.

been defeated by the Romans.[101] In the century that would pass between Krause's and Herre's writings, the "ethnographical" part of the argument would be enriched by a number of philological and anthropological theories, like for example Ernest Renan's theses regarding the Semites as an Oriental race and Friedrich Ratzel's conflation of sedentariness with civilization and its juxtaposition to nomadism.[102] This whole intellectual evolution would be reflected by Braudel's thesis of Carthage's North African "betrayal" of the West, which although distancing itself from racist overtones by the use of quotation marks would confirm the orientalist interpretation.[103]

In one way or another, since the start of the nineteenth century, North Africa was not seen as a part of Africa because throughout history it was contended between Orient and Occident, farmers and herders, sedentary people and nomads, coastland and steppe, Europe and Asia, Aryans and Semites, and so forth and so on. It appears clear also that Hegel's African attributes applied not so much to North Africa but to "Africa in its proper meaning": an Africa that extended south to what Braudel would call *l'autre Méditerranée*, that is, the Sahara, and which made of North Africa, according to Herre, "almost a peninsula between desert and sea." Yet the sea metaphor for the desert also had already been used in the early nineteenth century, by Zeune, who wrote that the Atlas chain was bordered by "the large sand sea, the Sahara, to the south, the Mediterranean to the north and the Atlantic Sea to the west."[104] The "Europeanization" of North Africa and the "Mediterraneanization" of the Sahara, that is, the southward expansion of their metaphorized "world," already during the Napoleonic period betrayed the European desire for the subjugation of the whole of Africa, which European power politics would achieve in the further course of the nineteenth century.

Finally, the Passage West.[105] The "penetrating influence of western Mediterranean civilization" that according to Braudel had spread out to build "the

101 Paul Herre, *Weltgeschichte am Mittelmeer* (Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft, 1929), 7, 44.

102 Ernest Renan, *Histoire générale et système comparé* (Imprimerie impériale, 1855) and Friedrich Ratzel, *Der Ursprung und das Wandern der Völker geographisch betrachtet* (Teubner, 1898), commented by Felix Wiedemann, "Narrating the History of the Other(s): The Near East in European Historiographical Accounts of the 19th and 20th Centuries," in *The Mediterranean Other – The Other Mediterranean*, ed. Medardus Brehl et al. (Schöningh, 2019), 193, 199.

103 Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, vol. 2, 757.

104 Zeune, *Gea*, 35.

105 For the use of this trope over time, see, among others, Giacomo Marramao, *The Passage West. Philosophy after the Age of the Nation State* (Verso, 2012), 15, 123; Braudel, *La Méditerranée*, 10; Franz Rosenzweig, *Zweistromland: Kleinere Schriften zur Religion und Philosophie* (Philo, 1926), 180–81.

modern world" had already been laid out by Alexander von Humboldt who sketched both a Mediterranean Europe and a "wider Mediterranean" by suggesting that civilization, through "the basin of the Mediterranean, which is open to the West," took its passage forward into the Atlantic and the wider world.[106] Columbus and the other Mediterranean seafarers promoted a process of global modernization the torch bearer of which became Europe. In Humboldt's geohistorical narrative, the Mediterranean basin was the primordial contact zone that conserved the heritage of the original passage of civilization from the Orient to the Occident. This motive was pivotal for both the European narrative of universal history and the transformation of the sea into a "world" that bears universal meaning and historical gravitas. So, it was starting from the Mediterranean that "humanity" reached out for historical fulfilment, in a movement throughout history from the Orient to the Occident, and from there to the conquest of the globe. "The highest progress of the human race, the complete development of its possibilities," Ritter wrote, "could not ensue till man should, in his wanderings from east to west, encompass the globe, and take possession of it, not for a day, but for all time."[107]

Ritter's books and lectures reached a broad audience. At different points in time, personalities like Otto von Bismarck and Karl Marx came to listen to his teachings. In 1851, a 21-year-old French student, Élisée Reclus, came to hear the aged German professor and remained deeply impressed. Despite being practically banned from an academic career in France (he would hold a chair of comparative geography at the University of Brussels), because of his political activism as a supporter of anarchism and the Paris Commune, Reclus's impact on the French geographical mind was outstanding. It was honored by the gold medal of the Paris Geographical Society he was awarded in 1892. Evidently, Reclus shared with Ritter the geolocation of progress when writing in 1876:

> The march of civilization has long operated in the direction of south-east to north-west: Phoenicia, Greece, Italy, France were successively the great homes of human intelligence. The main reason for this historical phenomenon is found in the same configuration of the sea that served as a vehicle for people on the move; the axis of civilization, so to speak, superposed the central axis of the Mediterranean waters from Syria to the Gulf of Lyon.[108]

106 Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, vol. 2, 835; Humboldt, *Kritische Untersuchungen*, 48.
107 Ritter, *Comparative Geography*, 57.
108 Reclus, *Nouvelle géographie universelle*, 47.

Again, the Mediterranean was presented as the vertex of an inverted cone through which the fundamental progression of mankind would spread out into the space and time of universal history. On a regional level, the anchor place of that vertex had moved from the east to the west, and from the south to the north, where France rested.

Of course, this is not to suggest that a precise flow of thought must be retraced to explain the emergence and diffusion of the Mediterranean space metaphor in the nineteenth century. The teachings of old Ritter and the learning processes of the young Reclus were merely episodes in a magmatic web of thoughts and interaction that cannot possibly be broken down into a precise set of all-explaining causal relationships. The emergence of a *monde méditerranéen*, which began to be more widely known under this name only in the early twentieth century, cannot be exactly retraced to single intellectual discoveries, say by French political discourse, German human geography, English romantic poetry, or anything else. All these intellectual developments were pre-shaped by the standard assumptions and narratives of Western philosophy of history, in particular since the Enlightenment. Weaving these assumptions successfully into the fabric of a new language of space description conferred on those already existing narratives a higher degree of credibility and dignity. But this does not mean that more practical and political people were less able to arrive at the same conclusions, on the basis of shared views of history and Europe that had been forming long since.

Such long-term cultural and ideological sediments apparently led in 1798 a military leader and politician like Napoleon Bonaparte to invoke history as the supreme judge of his intent to reunite the Mediterranean and bring civilization back to the Orient. Another French politician like Barrault, in 1835, also proved capable of condensing the essence of the Mediterranean mythologeme in a few lines: "Humanity, starting from the East, after having walked through the mountains, the valleys, the sands and the waves of the Mediterranean, always marching and spreading out, did not stop at the shores of the Ocean: conquest after conquest, from progress to progress, it has taken possession of its dignity and freedom, and taken the power of its genius to the new world."[109] After all, at his time this had already become a well-known and repeated tale, widely accepted with or without the regalia of academic approval.

109 Barrault, *Orient et Occident*, 497.

CHAPTER 5

Projecting the Nation onto the Mediterranean

In contrast to the previous century, French colonial expansion in the Mediterranean after 1815 could rely on an understanding with Great Britain that withstood all rivalries and frictions between the two powers. It managed to rein in even very tense moments like the Fashoda Incident of 1898, when the two powers came within a whisker of military clashes over the control of the upper reaches of the White Nile. France had to recognize that the United Kingdom remained the dominant military force in the Mediterranean area, even if it was less satisfied with the fact that the British also politically and economically became preeminent. British influence had to be factored into all formulae for Mediterranean geopolitics, and even the domestic political affairs of many Mediterranean countries, until at least the end of the Suez Crisis in 1956. This was the case, for example, for nation building in Greece, Italy, and the Balkans, and most importantly for the erosion of Ottoman power, the slow but relentless weakening of which led to the colonial partition of most of its Asian and African lands, and the creation of the "Middle East." According to Christopher Bayly, the "British wanted the Mediterranean to be *mare nostrum*, subject to the rule of law and safe for international commerce." The British constitutional monarchy became an inspiration for liberal reformers in Mediterranean countries, some of whom eagerly promoted "benevolent" British imperial influence. While the French were said to promote the inheritance of their revolution, that is, republicanism and human rights, through colonial subjugation, the British praised their own uncodified liberal constitution in an effort to distance themselves from "Jacobine" statism. This did not hinder them from promoting the "growth of the power and aims of the British imperial state," which expressed itself more often than not through biased trade regulations and "colonial despotism."[1]

Nevertheless, the British post-Vienna Mediterranean policy was "accompanied by a reformulation of imperial ideology."[2] There was a new emphasis on

1 Christopher A. Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World, 1780–1830* (Longman, 1989), 104, 115, 197; for the French evocation of revolutionary heritage, human rights, and the law of nations, see Édouard Driault, *La Question d'Orient 1918–1937. La Paix de la Méditerranée* (Alcan, 1938), 75.

2 Maurizio Isabella, "Mediterranean Liberals? Italian Revolutionaries and the Making of a Colonial Sea, ca. 1800–30," in *Mediterranean Diasporas. Politics and Ideas in the Long 19th Century*, ed. Maurizio Isabella and Konstantina Zanou (Bloomsbury, 2016), 80–82.

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the rule of law and the promotion of constitutional reform, which was in tended to establish a framework of international treaties that would secure British interests and increase the country's influence in the region by favoring the rise of like-minded national movements. The reformulation of imperial ideology also spoke to the fact that unideological stances were no longer an option in foreign policy for European great powers. After 1789, European diplomacy and theories of international law were increasingly reliant on ideological justification and attempts to morally legitimize the use of brute force. Realistically, however, British Mediterranean geopolitics followed its previous patterns. When seen from London City and English Parliament, the Mediterranean countries remained primarily import and export markets for British manufacture, and squares on the strategic chessboard. The sea was still a water highway that connected the North Atlantic with other areas of British interest in India, East Asia, the Persian Gulf, and Africa.

For all these reasons, several Mediterranean islands, as well as Egypt and the Levant, roused British colonial appetites, and undoubtedly put a brake on parallel French ambitions. As we have already hinted, French influence grew again in North Africa and the Levant in the 1820s and 1830s, competing with British efforts, especially under the ruler of Egypt, Mehmet Ali, who subjugated the Sudan first and then Syria.[3] In the latter country, both Mehmet Ali and French economic interests initially found a strong ally in Emir Bashīr al-Shihābī II, but in 1840 the Sublime Port and its local stalwarts, with the help of Britain and Russia, managed to drive Egypt's ruler out of the Levant, where he had hoped in vain for French support. For a moment it had seemed "that Egypt was capable of remaking an Arab empire on the ruins of the Ottoman empire. But England was worried about its route to India, as at the time of Bonaparte's expedition. It formed a Quadruple Alliance, a Holy Alliance against Egypt and France."[4] As Lamartine lamented, France woke up one day "seeing, in the place where Turkey was, only Russians and English that oppose us in all positions of the Mediterranean."[5]

In fact, throughout the nineteenth century, capitalising on its "old economic interests in the Ottoman Empire and its privileged position as a major trading partner with the Ottomans, France achieved considerable influence in

3 Ian Coller, "Ottomans on the Move: Hassuna D'Ghies and the 'New Ottomanism' of the 1830s," in *Mediterranean Diasporas. Politics and Ideas in the Long 19th Century*, ed. Maurizio Isabella and Konstantina Zanou (Bloomsbury, 2016), 107–11.

4 Driault, *La Question d'Orient*, 22.

5 Lamartine, *Vues, discours et articles*, 70.

the Mediterranean and an important degree of informal power."[6] Notwithstanding the severe setback for Paris in Egypt and Syria, the French presence remained powerful in both regions, as well as in the heartlands of the Ottoman Empire. Although the sometimes subtle and other times open rivalry between the two powers never disappeared, the fundamental British-French understanding was solid enough to allow for French colonial conquest in North Africa. "France spread over most of the southern shore of the Mediterranean, from Morocco to Tunisia, to the Sahara, to Egypt where, despite British pressure, it never completely gave up its place, and finally to the Levant (Lebanon and Syria) after 1918."[7]

While France was setting up what the historian and journalist René Pinon would call *L'empire de la Méditerranée*, the British Mediterranean possessions remained segments of a global realm "where the sun never sets." This did not imply that the region's "world historical role" was not fully recognized in Britain. As the mid-nineteenth-century president of the Royal Geographical Society, William Smyth, pointed out, the "political and social events which have occurred on the shores of this remarkable part of the ocean, are closely connected with the history of almost every country in the world."[8] In line with Britain's imperial perspective, Smyth's wording emphasized the Humboldtian "passage west" to the oceans, which encompassed a full recognition of the Mediterranean origin of European global conquest. By contrast, the French found it convenient to tie the Mediterranean's "world historical role" more tightly to a regional context, so as to merge the motherland's southern shores more easily with those of the colonies within a single imaginative space. British and French investments in ports, steamship routes, railways, and other infrastructure in the Mediterranean Basin thus obeyed partially different logics. Whereas the British saw the Mediterranean Sea as a section of the trade route with Mesopotamia, India, and East Asia via Suez, to the French it appeared more like "a lake that bound metropolitan France to the French departments of Algeria."[9] French novelist Louis Énault wrote in 1861:

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6 Anna Karakatsouli, "French Involvement in the Greek War of Independence," *Historein* 20, no. 1 (2021), accessed January 8, 2022, https://ejournals.epublishing.ekt.gr/index.php/historein/article/view/25062/22713.

7 Pierre Vermeren, *La France en terre d'Islam: Empire colonial et religions, XIX^{e}-XX^{e} siècles* (Belin, 2016), 14.

8 William Henry Smyth, *The Mediterranean: A Memoir Physical Historical and Nautical* (Parker & Son, 1854), 2.

9 John Perry, "A Shared Sea: The Axes of French and British Imperialism in the Mediterranean, 1798–1914," in *British and French Colonialism in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East*, ed. by James R. Fichter (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 127.

> The Mediterranean is a delicious lake, but a lake. It has neither ebb nor flow to trouble it. Just as you have to see the ocean by storm, so you have to see the Mediterranean when it is calm and serene. (…) The Mediterranean goes back, so to speak, to the first days of the world, and its memories merge with the first days of humanity. How many shores does it bathe, how many peoples does it quench their thirst, how many rivers does it receive, how many continents does it unite, how many islands does it surround with its beautiful waves! She perfumes herself with the oranges of Cadiz, and falls asleep in the gulf of Smyrna, after having harvested the flowers of the Archipelago. While laying her head between the columns of Hercules and her silver feet on the islands of the Aegean Sea, her arms touch Africa and Italy.[10]

By taking France elegantly out of the poetic picture, the French nation interpreted not just a part but the whole of the Mediterranean's mythologeme. While French feet were trampling on "the Orient" and French hands greedily reaching out for Africa, the metaphoric meaning of that space transformed their deeds into a noble act of world-historical fulfilment. France was driven by a civilizational mission that was no less "universal" than the British one, but circumstances meant that it was more in need of a narrative of Mediterranean intimacy that would endow its endeavor with a geophilosophical foundation for its supposedly exceptional role. No other country was thus better suited than France to forge the ideological minutiae of the "Mediterranean World," although the Mediterranean Sea was in the process of being integrated as a metaphor, in one way or another, into the self-understanding of every European nation.

1 British and French Colonialism

British attempts at imperial conquest in the Mediterranean in the early nineteenth century appeared to continue the efforts of the previous century, in creating strategically important naval bases and economically valuable trade hubs. Similar endeavours, albeit successful in Gibraltar, proved ephemeral in Menorca and Corsica, however. Things changed during the Napoleonic period. In 1800, the French surrendered Malta to Admiral Nelson's fleet, and the island became a "protectorate" of the British Empire which was destined to last until 1964. Local opposition that claimed the island was Catholic and Italian in character was contrasted by a British effort to promote the local

10 Louis Énault, *La Méditerranée, ses iles et ses bords* (Morizot, 1863), 2–3.

Arabic idiom and show "that the Maltese had Phoenician rather than Latin roots."[11] Malta was of an outstanding strategic importance that would only grow when the Suez Canal was opened in 1869.

Britain continued to expand its influence until the Congress of Vienna. For a short period, even the largest Mediterranean island, Sicily, became a British protectorate, where the British administration tried to promote a constitutional reform that local sympathizers hoped would kickstart Italy's unification. It appeared that in the British representative to the Court of Palermo, Lord William Bentinck's mind, Sicily represented a potential springboard for a pro-English nationalist revolt that could expand to the Italian mainland.[12] Another British officer claimed instead that England should keep Sicily as a colony and reform the island "where nature has done so much and man so little." Britain would overcome the island's "mismanagement, superstition, and ill-treatment," derive great "commercial and other advantages" from its possession, and dodge "the danger of its being annexed to France."[13]

In the wake of the Congress of Vienna, English influence in Italian affairs declined, albeit never waning. On the other hand, Britain obtained possession of the Ionian Islands, and with them "the opportunity to observe at first-hand what was going on in the Ottoman Empire, in a period during which the Eastern Question was at its height."[14] Although the Mediterranean Pax Britannica "promised a new era of imperial liberal reforms" to its protectorate, it had in store only "a system of unrestricted colonial despotism" for the United States of the Ionian Islands.[15] When the islands were ceded to Greece during the Crimean War, Britain was already in a comfortable position from which to continue its observation of the "Eastern Question" from within the Ottoman Empire, where in the meantime it had acquired strong influence. It was likewise able to bend Egyptian policy to its will. Next door, in Tripoli, British Consul Hanmer Warrington established what was "virtually an informal British province" between 1814 and 1846, which also served as a launch-pad for the

11 Deborah Paci, *Between the Seas: Island Identities in the Baltic and Mediterranean Seas* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2023), 149.

12 John Rosselli, *Lord William Bentinck and the British Occupation of Sicily 1811-14* (Cambridge University Press, 1956), 102; see also, Isabella, "Mediterranean Liberals?," 80–82.

13 George Cockburn, *A Voyage to Cadiz and Gibraltar, up to Sicily and Malta* (Harding-Maher, 1815), iv-vi.

14 Gerassimos Pagratis, "The Ionian Islands under British 'Protection' (1815–1864)," in *Anglo-Saxons in the Mediterranean: Commerce, Politics and Ideas* (*XVII–XX Centuries*), ed. Carmel Vassallo and Michela D'Angelo (Malta University Press 2007), 131.

15 Zanou, *Transnational Patriotism*, 15.

British "exploration of the Niger Valley."[16] The possession of Cyprus and Egypt would follow later in the century.

Hollowing Out the Ottoman Empire

Perhaps the single most important aspect of imperialist dominance in the Mediterranean before the First World War was neither the imposition of colonial rule over a number of islands nor the control of vast swaths of country that bordered with the sea. Rather, it was the de-facto subjugation of the Ottoman Empire itself, which since the late-eighteenth century was increasingly deprived of the full recognition of its state sovereignty by other European powers. The "globally expanding European order" reserved the reciprocal recognition of sovereign rights to a "community of 'civilized nations' to which the Arab and Ottoman worlds, among others, did not belong."[17] The Sultan, one of Europe's major rulers, de facto remained excluded from the arrangements of the Congress of Vienna, although it appears that Mahmud II received an invitation to send a delegation, and that he stood away because he perceived the eagerness of some of its major protagonists to secure their economic interests at his own expense.[18]

Napoleon's recent invasion of Egypt and the aspirations for autonomy or even separation, which were fomented from outside in several provinces, gave the Sultan justified concern for the territorial unity of his sovereign domains. His concern proved well-founded, as the "Serbian (1804) and Greek (1821) insurrections were the beginning of what proved to be an unstoppable haemorrhaging of territory in the empire's European heartland."[19] In the Levant and North Africa, the empire's territorial integrity came also under growing pressure from European interference, leading to the loss of Algiers, Tunisia, and Cyprus, and weakening the Sublime Porte's position in Egypt. Political and military interventions to suppress revolts that menaced the territorial integrity of Mahmud's and his successors' reign were stigmatized in Europe as being illegitimate. Stigmatization was often accompanied by anthropological explanations, which stood out as an intellectual tool to disassemble the

16 Bayly, *Imperial Meridian*, 197.

17 James McDougall, "Sovereignty, Governance, and Political Community in the Ottoman Empire and North Africa," in *Re-imagining Democracy in the Mediterranean, 1780–1860*, ed. by Joanna Innes and Mark Philp (Oxford University Press, 2018), 128, 142.

18 Ozan Ozavci, "A Priceless Grace? The Congress of Vienna of 1815, the Ottoman Empire and Historicising the Eastern Question," *The English Historical Review* 136, no. 583 (2021): 1450–76.

19 Greene, "The Ottoman Experience," 89.

"motley crowd" of Ottoman subjects into individual parts and stir up preexisting conflicts among them. Western efforts were directed at detailing "all the numerous races that go to make up the nationality we designate the Levantine" and those of "the Egyptian world – that strange amalgam of all races."[20]

Thanks to European alliances with local notables and the cultural penetration put forth by Catholic and Protestant missions, schools, press, books, and so on, these efforts resulted in a tendency to racialize (or "ethnicize," in present terms) the conception and, thereafter, self-conception of various linguistic and confessional groups, which could then be maneuvered politically. "Maronites and Druze in Lebanon, Greeks and Armenians in Anatolia, Jews in North Africa found themselves pushed by forces beyond themselves, and which they could themselves only partly direct and channel, into new political spaces" that could easily drag them into situations of de-stabilizing conflict "even when they themselves imagined no alternative focus of political loyalty."[21]

The reason that similar efforts had an increasing chance of success becomes clearer when their entanglement with economic processes is considered. Over the course of the nineteenth century, European industrialization and mechanization altered the basic equation of trade relations. For centuries, the Ottoman Empire had maintained a positive trade balance, as domestic demand for European products remained low due to their limited attractiveness in terms of price, quality, and utility. At the same time, Europe was a welcome export market for Ottoman raw materials and manufactured goods, as well as for transit trade. The exports benefited local producers and traders and generated fiscal income from customs duties and taxes. This helps explain the asymmetry of the "capitulations," in which the Sublime Porte readily conceded ample privileges to European merchants, consuls, and their local protégés without requiring reciprocity. But during the nineteenth century, the structure of trade and dependency reversed.

On the one hand, European industrialization generated unprecedented demand for commodities, creating new income opportunities in the Ottoman Empire from export crops like wheat, sugar, raw cotton, and silk. The improved climate following the Little Ice Age allowed fallow land and lowland pastures to be reclaimed for wheat and other cash crops. The general revival of commercial agriculture altered local agrarian structures and fostered interest groups that advocated for trade liberalization and land privati-

20 Edwin De Leon, *The Khedive's Egypt, or, the Old House of Bondage under New Masters* (Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1877), 52, 54.

21 McDougall, "Sovereignty, Governance," 147.

zation. Consequently, in certain areas land ownership became concentrated in the hands of a few individuals. As large tracts fell under the control of absentee landlords, the income and living conditions of the peasantry deteriorated.[22] Similar shifts toward a rent-based tenure systems prepared the ground for European colonial settlement and commercial exploitation of the Ottoman provinces. On the other hand, cheap manufactured products flooded the Ottoman market, mirroring trends across the globe, thus changing both the terms of trade and its balance. By around 1850, the Ottoman Empire was Great Britain's third most important export market, after the domestic and transit markets of Northwestern Europe.[23]

In these circumstances, the privileges granted to foreign trade communities under the capitulations became an increasingly important lever for European interference in Ottoman internal affairs. While the European diplomats' outright sale of protection letters (*beratlı*) for tax exempted non-Muslim local subjects flourished, the thought took root in the foreign offices "that the various European powers had the right to extend protection to co-religionists inside the Ottoman Empire."[24] Mainly France and Great Britain "changed the nature of their consular networks as well as that of 'protection' (…) to weave client networks in the cities of the Empire."[25] The foreign trade communities, their consuls, and their companies backed local protégés and partners in demanding "reforms," while simultaneously lobbying politicians and public opinion in their home countries to advocate for political and military intervention or even outright colonization. The British merchant community in Ottoman territories vocally championed free trade and pushed relentlessly for the abolition of internal customs duties and state monopolies on the purchase of agricultural goods and other commodities. Great Britain exploited the 1831–40 Egyptian-Ottoman wars over Syria and Anatolia to exchange its military assistance for trade liberalization and the abolition of protectionist measures. To secure British support against the Egyptian advance, the Sublime Porte signed the 1838 Balta Liman Commercial Treaty. Two years later, as the Egyptian defeat loomed, the European powers—Great Britain, France, Austria, Russia, and Prussia—brokered a settlement to the "Oriental Crisis," permitting Mehmet Ali to retain control over Egypt and Sudan on the condi-

22 Tabak, *The Waning of the Mediterranean*, 224–30; and Rashid Khalidi, *The Hundred Years' War on Palestine. A History of Settler Colonialism and Resistance, 1917–2017* (Profile Books, 2024), 17.

23 Rutledge, *Sea of Troubles*, 251.

24 Gallant, *The Edinburgh History of the Greeks*, 22.

25 Lafi, "L'Empire ottoman en Afrique," 5.

tion that he accept Ottoman sovereignty and implement recent Ottoman reforms in the Egyptian province.[26]

The Balta Liman Commercial Treaty of 1838 and the subsequent *tanzimât* ("reorganization") period of 1839–76 enforced free trade rules, fixed tariffs in external trade, and abolished internal customs duties and state monopolies, measures that soon "swept away the traditional domestic manufacturing sector."[27] Even after 1876, the process continued due to the momentum of structural change. In the countryside, adapting to local conditions, fertile farmland "that once fed local consumption needs and produced a profitable annual surplus of cash crops for the Ottoman state became arenas of capitalist competition."[28]

The most effective method of weakening the Empire, however, was its financial depletion from within by European actors, as free trade "led to trade deficits" and pushed internal and state actors "to borrow abroad" to cover them.[29] The process thus ensued through debt cycle mechanisms, a trap into which Ottoman elites and local rulers were lured with promises of trade revenues, investment, rearmament, and "modernization." Resource extraction occurred not only through interest payments; during liquidity crises or bankruptcy of the treasury, it was reinforced by mortgaging, or even direct European seizure, of fiscal revenues.

While the Ottoman state's fiscal sovereignty was hollowed out in this way, its administrative and repressive apparatus remained in place and was reinforced to actually, if to a certain extent inadvertently, serve the transfer of resources even better than an open colonial dictatorship might have been able to do. In this respect, the Mediterranean area, with a bleeding Ottoman Empire at its center, was not exempted from the rules being imposed on the rest of the "backward" and colonized world. A "tax-based appropriation of surplus by the metropolis" was being practiced in India by the East India Company first, and then the British state; something similar occurred in many other countries and world regions, even before formal colonization or without it.[30]

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26 Rutledge, *Sea of Troubles*, 250–61.

27 Giampaolo Conte, "Defining financial reforms in the 19th-century capitalist world economy: The Ottoman case (1838–1914)," *Capital & Class* 46, no. 1 (2022): 39.

28 Isa Blumi, *Reinstating the Ottomans. Alternative Balkan Modernities, 1800–1912* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 13.

29 Conte, "Defining financial reforms," 37.

30 Utsa Patnaik and Prabhat Patnaik, *Capital and Imperialism: Theory, History, and the Present* (Monthly Review Press, 2021), 51; the Indian example is treated in the pages 128–50.

In the Ottoman Empire, the *tanzimât* reforms sought administrative centralization and bureaucratic modernization. Officially, they were intended not to surrender the Empire to foreigners but rather to preserve its existence and strengthen its position in the great-power political arena. New ministries, such as those of Finance and Commerce, were created, alongside more centralized administrative structures extending from the state level down to provinces, districts, and towns. The process sparked the opposition of local notables and religious scholars. But "politically reactionary visions were not just the expression of a reticence against modernization: they were also the manifestation against the early colonial instrumentalization of modernisation reforms by foreign powers," as Nora Lafi explains.[31] Indeed, from an economic perspective, such views were not unfounded. Contrary to their declared intention, the reforms' liberal design further eroded the Empire's economic and political independence at a time when rising industrial productivity in Britain and Europe worsened the Ottoman terms of trade.

In the 1840s and 1850s, Grand Vizier Mustafa Reşid, who in the role of ambassador had negotiated the Balta Liman agreement with London, became the driving force behind the *tanzimât* transformation. The monetary reform of 1844, which adopted a system "tied partly to gold," exposed domestic producers more easily to currency fluctuations on foreign markets.[32] "In destroying state monopolies and in holding down tariff levels, the Anglo-Turkish Commercial convention curtailed government revenues: in promoting reform it also imposed new burdens on the budget."[33] These pressures exacerbated dramatic budget deficits, while currency depreciation amplified the burden of foreign loans. The Imperial government contracted its first international loan in 1854, during the Crimean War.[34]

In 1856, Mehmed Emin Âlî Paşa and Mehmed Fuad Paşa, both protégés of Reşid with close ties to Anglo-French financial and diplomatic circles, enacted additional legislation that "honoured the liberal image of the empire" while facilitating deeper "commercial and economic penetration by foreign capital."[35] The sale, purchase, and mortgaging of state-owned *miri* farmland had

31 Nora Lafi, "Conceptualising Urbanity, Reinterpreting Coexistence: A *ḥisba* Manuscript of the Late Ottoman Era in Tunis," in *Religion and Urbanity Online*, ed. by Susanne Rau and Jörg Rüpke (De Gruyter, 2022), accessed February 12, 2025, https://doi.org/10.1515/urbrel.11276311.

32 Conte, "Defining financial reforms," 40–41.

33 Peter J. Cain and Antony G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism, 1600–2000* (Longman, 2001), 343.

34 Conte, "Defining financial reforms," 41.

35 Luis Miguel Selvelli, *Antenati a Costantinopoli. Esuli italiani negli anni del riformismo ottomano, 1828–1878* (Poligrafo, 2022), 99.

been a practice long since, but legally these transactions involved usufruct rights and land tenure rather than private ownership (*mülk*). The latter received a more favorable regulation by the Ottoman Land Code of 1858.[36] Ten years later, "a law was passed giving foreigners all the rights of Ottoman subjects in the matter of possessing immovable properties."[37]

The Imperial Ottoman Bank (Bank-ı Osmanî-i Şahane) was founded to serve as an investment hub for the Empire. However, post-war reconstruction after the Crimean War, along with infrastructure projects and "modernization" efforts, became increasingly dependent on foreign loans, disbursed primarily by financial institutions in London and Paris, with later participation from German and other European banks. "By 1875 over half the Ottoman budget was assigned to servicing external obligations, and new loans were being raised to pay the interest on earlier debts." With the Serbian and Montenegrin wars of independence raging and another Russo-Ottoman conflict looming, the Ottoman state defaulted in 1876. That December, "a conference of representatives of the European powers met in Istanbul (to which the Porte was not invited) in an attempt to defuse the crisis."[38] The very composition and venue of this meeting laid bare the Empire's drastic loss of sovereignty through indebtedness. The formal bankruptcy declaration came in 1879, following the catastrophic defeat by the Tsarist army.[39]

In 1878, the Ottoman Empire bartered the administration of Cyprus for Great Britain's decisive support at the Congress of Berlin. During the First World War, which turned the British and Ottoman empires into enemies, Cyprus was placed under British occupation. In 1925, after the demise of the Ottoman Empire, the island was transformed into a British Crown Colony until 1960, when independence was conceded against a Treaty of Establishment that guaranteed British military presence on the island. Independently of the changing institutional arrangements, Britain erected a coherently colo-

36 Fatma Gül Karagöz, "The Road to the 1858 Ottoman Land Code: Theory and Practice," *Islamic Law Blog*, June 27 (2024), accessed March 12, 2025, https://islamiclaw.blog/2024/06/27/the-road-to-the-1858-ottoman-land-code-theory-and-practice/; Yücel Terzibaşoğlu, "Landlords, refugees and nomads: Struggles for land around late-nineteenth century Ayvalık," *New Perspectives on Turkey* 24 (2001): 51–82; Conte, "Defining financial reforms," 45.

37 Richard Clifford Tute, *The Ottoman Land Laws, with a Commentary on the Ottoman Land Code of 7th Ramadan 1274* (Greek Conv. Press, 1927), 103.

38 Rutledge, *Sea of Troubles*, 347.

39 Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism,* 344.

nial government from day one of their administration. Britain's master-race taxonomy saw Cyprus, together "with Mandated Palestine and perhaps Ceylon," as more civilized than its African and Malayan colonies but it cultivated British colonial supremacy nevertheless towards the whole of the native population, which was governed and split according to the usual *divide et impera* routine. Under the pretense of giving "fair treatment" to each group, the British educational and administrative system fostered the nationalization of the former Ottoman subjects, accentuating their ethnic diversity, a policy with long-term effects that contributed to the 1974 Greek-Turkish partition of the island.[40]

Returning to the Ottoman Empire of the late nineteenth century, we see how it was struggling to regain the trust of foreign investors. In 1881, the government agreed with its creditors "to make the external debt the first charge of its revenues, to hand over the administration of a sizable proportion of these revenues, and to cede control over tariff rates on imports and exports."[41] After 1896, the crisis-riddled state leaned more and more on the German Reich to obtain technical and financial support for its projects. The cooperation extended increasingly to the military realm, foreshadowing new alliances.[42] However, the partial reorientation of Ottoman foreign relations did not alter the basic pattern of dependency. Until the Young Turks stood up in 1908 and the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) seized government, the Ottoman Public Debt Administration, a de facto British and French-run international body with around 700 offices disseminated across the Ottoman territories, was "the most powerful economic agency in the Empire."[43]

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40 Words of the British Governor of Cyprus, Sir Ronald Storrs (1926-1932), reported by Panayiotis Persianis, "The British Colonial Education 'Lending' Policy in Cyprus (1878-1960)," *Comparative Education* 32, no. 1 (1996): 47; see also İçim Özenli Özmatyatli and Ali Efdal Özkul, "20th Century British Colonialism in Cyprus through Education," *Egitim Arastirmalari-Eurasian Journal of Educational Research* 50 (2013): 1–20; Christos Ioannides, "Cyprus, British Colonialism and the Seeds of Partition: From Coexistence to Communal Strife," *Journal of Modern Hellenism* 30 (2014): 41–70.

41 Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism*, 346.

42 From an undated travelogue of a German observer in Istanbul: "The Turkish troops made a very good impression and marched past the Sultan in a brisk parade march; Ferdinand of Bulgaria was also present"; Archiv für Geographie (AfG) Leibniz-Institut für Länderkunde, Leipzig; Nachlass Partsch, box 29 shelfmark 57, 29/57 Arbeitsmaterial Mittelmeer, copy of an undated travelogue.

43 Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism*, 347; see also Conte, "Defining financial reforms," 40–41.

Resistance Against the Erosion of Ottoman Sovereignty in Libya

The Ottoman Maghrebin provinces, in line with the Empire's broader trajectory, also became increasingly dependent on British, French, and other foreign loans. This spiral of indebtedness and refinancing led to unequal treaties that secured political influence for creditors even before direct colonial takeover. Libya exemplified this trend. Since the early nineteenth century, British trade interests had successfully integrated themselves into the traditional trans-Saharan trade through Fezzan. These interests were spearheaded by the aforementioned consul Warrington, "an odious figure who leveraged diplomatic immunity to exercise despotic proconsular authority."[44] The Karamanlı Paşa dynasty, plagued by debt crises since the 1820s, entered a period of upheaval marked by regional insurgencies and dynastic infighting, with rival factions relying on Egyptian, British, or French backing.

Since that time, the Sultan's government had attempted to implement countermeasures in the province, particularly in response to the armed conflict with Egypt's breakaway rulers and the ongoing French colonization of Algeria. In 1835, Ottoman troops landed in Tripoli and terminated the crisis-ridden Karamanlı reign. Over the following two decades, they succeeded in consolidating direct rule over the province and reorganizing its administrative structures as part of broader reforms, though this process also relied on violently suppressing regional insurgencies fueled by excessive taxes. Yet throughout this effort to strengthen the Sultan's grip, "the Union Jack tailed the Ottoman *Ayyıldız* throughout Tripolitania and Fezzan." Thus, even after the central Ottoman authority replaced political structures dominated by local clients of European powers, and even after it retook control of trade networks linking the Sudan and Sahel regions to the seaports, British and other European interests retained their financial dominance within the shifting power dynamics. As a result, "finance assumed the vanguard role previously occupied by merchant capital and its missionary-explorer foot soldiers."[45] The stronger Ottoman presence notwithstanding, the province remained infested with "French, British, German and Italian spies trying to acquire information for the preparation of a control."[46]

This does not mean that the Ottoman Empire failed to undertake significant military, political, economic, and cultural efforts to secure a region criti-

44 Jonathan M. Lohnes, "Libyan Provincialization and the Invention of Ottoman Africa," *Eurasian Studies* 21 (2023): 212.

45 Lohnes, "Libyan Provincialization," 218, 220.

46 Lafi, "Africa and the Nature of the Ottoman Empire," 290.

cal to its trade routes with Central Africa. It did so, especially after the loss of Tunis and Egypt in 1881–82, leaving the Vilâyet of Tripoli as the Empire's last remaining African territory. Given its geopolitical importance, Istanbul sought to deepen its ties not only with the port cities, coastal merchant class, and religious elites but also with the Saharan hinterland's population. Moreover, it strengthened its bonds with Sufi orders, whose influence extended across both regions, linking the oases and trans-Saharan trade routes to the coastal commercial and religious centres. Overall, collaboration between "the Turks"—Ottoman officials of diverse geographic and linguistic origins—and local inhabitants intensified.[47] Unlike in the Levant, where Turkish-Arab cooperation failed to gain momentum and resist colonialism, this tightening alliance shaped early Libyan resistance against Italian colonialism on the eve of the First World War.

Reshaping the Levant

Over the whole nineteenth century, European states continued to "jostle for influence" in the Province of Syria, whose population at the time was nearly evenly split between Muslims and Christians, with both groups comprising a variety of denominations and sects. The Ottoman authorities cracked down on Greek Orthodox communities in response to the 1821 uprisings in Morea and the Danubian provinces, while Maronite commoners in Mount Lebanon rose up with economic and social grievances. Several social groups—particularly peasants and small rentiers across the Empire—protested against the increasing "military-fiscal extraction of wealth." In the Vilâyetler of Beirut and Damascus, however, these conflicts did not immediately assume the confessional and liberal-nationalist character seen in (or later attributed to) revolts in Morea and the Danubian provinces.[48] Instead, the struggles centered on multilayered social issues, such as peasant resistance against abuses stemming from the privatization of tax farming (*muqāṭa'jīya*) on Ottoman crown lands that the landholders imposed upon them. The latter were predominantly (though not exclusively) members of powerful Maronite or Druze clans. Their system included sharecropping and other quasi-feudal practices.

47 Lafi, "Africa and the Nature of the Ottoman Empire," 290–96.

48 Peter Hill, "How global was the age of revolutions? The case of Mount Lebanon, 1821," *Journal of Global History* 16, no. 1 (2021): 82–84.

Since the peasantry was confessionally mixed, these conflicts had not led to a vertical divide along sectarian lines within society.[49]

However, this soon changed as tensions between the imperial center and local forces grew, and western powers increasingly infiltrated the political dynamics of the Syrian region. While the Americans supported the small Protestant Christian community and Russia claimed to protect the larger Orthodox population, France and Great Britain, in particular, "began fishing in the deep and poisonous waters of religious sectarianism."[50] In the 1840s, after Egypt had been driven out with British assistance, the Ottoman-European free trade agreements "set the stage for the influx of European commodities and capital" into the region.[51] Britain, as the leading industrial exporter, became the dominant trade partner of the Syrian province. Politically, however, France held even greater influence due to centuries of extensive trade relations, consular presence, and close cooperation, especially with Maronite economic elites. France also developed a particular interest in local raw silk production, promoting its expansion and intensification. As the French began funnelling weapons to Maronite militias, Britain backed the Druze. The "civil wars" of 1841 and 1845, initially sparked by social tensions between peasants and landlords, were exacerbated and transformed into sectarian conflicts primarily by France and Britain, who dragged "their respective clients in a struggle which became a proxy war between the two European powers."[52]

In the 1850s, French imports of raw silk continued to soar to such an extent that the booming French silk industry became dependent on Lebanese crops. In Mount Lebanon, mulberry cultivation expanded into new areas, reducing land available for domestic needs and making agriculture increasingly dependent on the volatile European silk market. During the crisis years of 1858–60, conflicts erupted between Christian peasants and Druze landlords. Contrary to the traditional code of conduct which would have required them to support their suffering peasants, the landlords instead sought to compensate for their own losses and debts by intensifying rent extraction from the peasantry. This third armed conflict was again transformed into a sectarian "civil war" through the incitement of peasants by French-backed Maronite clergy.[53] In 1860, French troops landed in Beirut "to protect Christians" but were deterred

49 Fawwaz Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon* (Pluto Press, 2007), 12–22; Hill, "Mount Lebanon," 34–37; Rutledge, *Sea of Troubles*, 281–82.

50 Rutledge, *Sea of Troubles*, 285.

51 Jens Hanssen, "*Nafir Suriyya* in Arab Historiography," in Butrus al-Bustani, *The Clarion of Syria* [1861] (University of California Press, 2019), 43.

52 Rutledge, *Sea of Troubles*, 285, also 280, 286–87.

53 Rutledge, *Sea of Troubles*, 299–305.

from direct intervention by a strong British naval presence. The following year, the competing European powers convened in Istanbul to negotiate a compromise. They "proposed" a *Règlement Définitif* which the Ottoman government was forced to accept. This arrangement stipulated that Lebanon would be governed by a Christian governor appointed by the Sultan. "While the Porte was thus assured central control over the whole region, the individual religious sects were given local autonomy with the right to appoint their own local leaders."[54] In the Lebanese *mutaṣarrifīyah* (governorate), administrative and tax-collecting positions were allocated along sectarian lines. Gradually, a political structure based on sectarian proportionalism emerged—one that the Republic of Lebanon would inherit following its independence in 1943.[55]

"Securing" Egypt and Sudan

The origins of the long-lasting British influence in Egypt date back to the successful alliance with the Sultan of Constantinople which succeeded in fighting back Napoleon's assault. Once Mehmet Ali had outmaneuvered his rivals among the Ottoman ranks and Mamluk élites and managed to be appointed *wāli* of Egypt in 1805, the ties with both France and Great Britain became strong. Egypt developed cash crops such as cotton, grain, and sugar that were exported in substantial amounts to the United Kingdom and other destinations.[56] Yet the *paşa*'s developmental and military policy seemed more in tune with French statism and protectionism than with British free-trade practices. Only after the defeat of his expansionist ambitions in Syria, the British-Ottoman free-trade arrangements were extended to Egypt. They gave England commercial and political leverage over French influence, although the latter remained significant, and even increased again under Napoleon III.

The French and British operated extensive direct investments in Egyptian infrastructure, industry, and foreign commerce. In 1848, on the occasion of the somewhat troubled transfer of power from Mehmet Ali I to his son Ibrāhīm and then to his grandson 'Abbās Ḥilmī, the authoritative role of the European Consuls General in ensuring "the smooth running of business and the tran-

54 Rutledge, *Sea of Troubles*, 312.

55 As'ad AbuKhalil, *Historical Dictionary of Lebanon* (Scarecrow Press, 1998), 7; Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 22–40; Abdul Latif Tibawi, *A Modern History of Syria including Lebanon and Palestine* (Macmillan, 1969), 131–32.

56 De Leon, *The Khedive's Egypt*, 433–35.

quillity of the country" became apparent.[57] As soon as Memet Ali's younger son Sa'īd ascended to power in 1854, his old acquaintance, the French Ferdinand de Lesseps, obtained the concession for the Suez Canal despite British disapproval. Sa'īd supported the implementation of the Canal with substantial Egyptian contributions of land, labor, and capital; he put forth a policy of liberalization; favored European immigration into Alexandria, Cairo, and the Nile Delta; and appointed Europeans in his civil and military administration. At the end of his life, "he expressed deep regret that he had saddled his country with a public loan and a public debt."[58]

In 1867, Egypt was granted the status of an autonomous vassal state, and Mehmet Ali's then-reigning grandson Ismā'īl's title was upgraded from *wāli* to *khedive*. In the meantime, the Egyptian budget continued bleeding to construct the French-inspired Suez Canal and the implementation of railroads and freshwater canals that allowed the cultivation of new lands. If the process benefitted the economy as a whole, it also advanced the particular interests of cash crop investors and exporters. The country's public debt "began to be marketed externally from 1862, principally to finance the construction of the Suez Canal and to underwrite the military budget." The country "became heavily indebted to the capitalists of London and Paris, thus opening the way for European intervention in Egypt's internal affairs."[59] During the initial years after the Canal's inauguration (Figure 5.1), revenues remained behind expectations. In 1875, Ismā'īl was forced to sell out the Egyptian shares to London, which, with an ownership of 44% of the Suez Canal Company, brought this strategic piece of infrastructure—"planned and perfected by French pertinacity and French francs, eked out by Egyptian indemnities and contributions"—under British control.[60]

The transaction, however, was far from sufficient to extinguish the Egyptian debts, the refinancing of which had to rely on new loans with interest rates up to a 30%. In 1876, Egypt went bankrupt, and to ensure that the country would pay its debts, it was obliged to create *La Caisse de la Dette Publique* controlled by British banks and the French, Italian, and Austrian governments. *La Caisse* directly pocketed the land tax revenues of the richest provinces, property taxes from Cairo and Alexandria, the salt and tobacco taxes, and the customs duties. The operations were surveyed by two "controllers-general," one French

57 Archivio Storico Diplomatico, Ministero Affari Esteri (ASDMAE), Consolato Sardo ad Alessandria d'Egitto 1825–1866, busta 7, f Corrispondenza dal Cairo dall'ottobre 1848, lettera Roberto Vernoni a Luigi Cerruti, 14 novembre 1848.

58 De Leon, *The Khedive's Egypt*, 101.

59 Edward Atiyah, *The Arabs* (Penguin, 1955), 79.

60 De Leon, *The Khedive's Egypt*, 38.

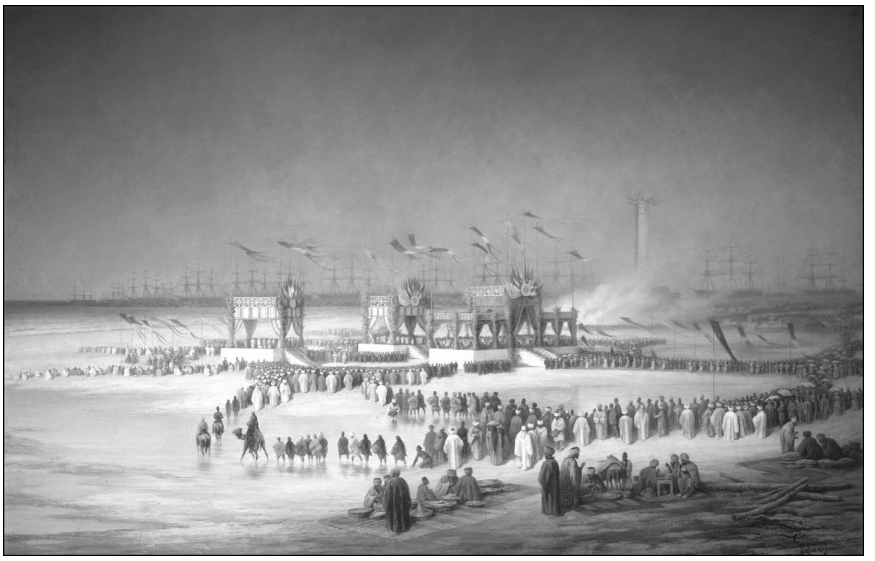


FIGURE 5.1 Inauguration ceremony of the Suez Canal at Port Said, 17 November 1869. Painting by Édouard Riou. Public Domain, Wikimedia Commons.

and one British, who entered the Egyptian government as ministers of Public Works and Finance, respectively. To uphold the inflow, the "kurbash, a buffalo-hide whip, was found to be a very effective method for extracting money from the suffering peasants."[61] In relation to the newly cultivated lands, the ranks of the fellahin workforce threatened to thin out, all the more so as they were further decimated by disease and conscription. Therefore, "thoughtful Europeans in Egypt" proposed to import a Chinese workforce and suggested that, in the plantations, the "yellow face" of Coolies would mix well with "the copper-coloured labourers" without any "sharp dividing line of character, custom and race" between them.[62] Apparently this idea, although thoughtful and European, went too far even for the Khedivate.

Unimpressed by difficulties in the sphere of production, the "controllers" foresaw not only the enhancement of fiscal income but also harsh budgetary cuts to reactivate the debt service. These measures disrupted domestic investment, inflamed national and social upheaval, and prompted an organized army revolt driven by an "anti-European as well as anti-Ottoman and anti-Mameluke" movement led by General Aḥmad ʻUrābī. When the nationalist movement managed to gain influence in government, it took measures against

61 Rutledge, *Sea of Troubles*, 343.

62 De Leon, *The Khedive's Egypt*, 33–34.

the interests of the Anglo-French consortium, which of course considered countermeasures.[63]

However, the French-British creditors opposed an Ottoman military intervention in Egypt. Other European consuls joined in, urging Constantinople to respect the autonomy of the Khedivate of Egypt, and the Sultan protested his inalienable rights over Egypt in vain. The strong European pressure in favor of Egypt's autonomy proved to be as hypocritical as it was instrumental. In 1882, the re-establishment of public order and the protection of the interests of European investors in Egypt, as well as of Christians against "bloodthirsty Muslim fanatics," were pretext enough for British occupation.[64] The military conquest then extended to the Sudan, where the Mahdist movement, originally born in opposition to what it deemed an "apostate" regime of Ottoman-Egyptian domination, was fighting for a "return to the idealist model of the first Islamic State in Madinah."[65] In 1899, the "Sudan campaign" led to the final defeat of the movement by an alliance of Britain with Italy (Eritrea), Belgium (Congo Free State), and other forces.

As soon as it came under British influence, Egypt, in addition to its functions as a producer of export crops and the geographical site of the passage to India, became another springboard for British expansion into East and Central Africa. In the 1860s and 1870s, British and other European officers, explorers, and adventurers participated in the Egyptian occupation of Sudan and its expansion towards Equatoria, mostly as officials of the Khedive. This was the case for Samuel White Baker, Charles George Gordon, Licurgo Santoni, Romolo Gessi, Charles Chaillé-Long, Isaak Eduard Schnitzer (Amīn Bāshā), and others. The intelligence of an ivory trader like Antoine Brun-Rollet, who was appointed Sardinian Consul in Khartoum in 1855 after having published a description of the upper White Nile, was also at the disposal of the Egyptian government and European diplomacy.[66] Whatever the original motives of the Egyptian expansion into Sudan and Central Africa had been, it was first leveraged and then taken over by European, in particular British, colonialists.

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63 Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism*, 312–17; Bárbara Azaola Piazza, *Historia del Egipto contemporáneo* (Catarata, 2008), 27–29.

64 Rutledge, *Sea of Troubles*, 370; and Henry Laurens, "La France et l'Égypte en 1882," in *La France et l'Égypte à l'époque des vice-rois 1805–1882*, ed. Daniel Panzac and André Raymond (Institut français d'archeologie orientale, 2002), 340–43.

65 Ahmed Ibrahim Abushouk, "The Ideology of the Expected Mahdê," *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture* 30, no. 1 (2009): 53, 56.

66 See the exchange of notes, by and about Brun-Rollet, with the Sardinian Consul General in ASDMAE, Legazione Sarda ad Alessandria d'Egitto, 1825–1866, busta 34, f Brun-Rollet and f Corrispondenze col Consolato d'Austria in Egitto.

British colonial rule over Egypt lasted officially until 1922, when Britain conceded Egyptian independence and a constitution one year later. Within this framework, national forces, such as the governing Wafd Party and the oppositional Muslim Brotherhood founded in 1928, could sort out their political gambits. Effective independence, however, would not be achieved until the movement of Free Officers led by Muḥammad Najīb seized power on July 23, 1952, and Jamāl ʻAbd al-Nāṣir took the reins of government two years later. In that year, Britain had to concede the withdrawal of its troops from the Suez Canal Zone. The nationalization of the Suez Canal in 1956, and the failure of the British-French attempt to prevent it, marked the effective achievement of national independence for Egypt. It was a symbolically crepuscular moment in the downfall of the British Empire, and a foreshadowing that the French colonial possessions in the Mediterranean were close to sharing the same fate.[67]

Algeria: Laying the Cornerstone of the *Empire de la Méditerranée*

In order to insert the history of French Mediterranean colonialism into the broader picture of imperialist endeavor, it is worth rewinding our narration once again to the early nineteenth century. After raids by the USA in 1801–05, a Dutch-British fleet devastated Algiers in late August 1816 and forced Tunis and Tripoli into obedience regarding issues of *corso* and captivity for ransom.[68] In many ways, however, the 1816 expedition also "constituted a reprise of Napoleon's 1798 invasion of Egypt as well as a dress rehearsal for France's occupation of Algiers."[69]

French consul Michel Guyot de Kercy had made his earliest proposal for a temporary occupation of Algiers in 1782.[70] During his imperial reign, Napoleon I had also nurtured plans of seizing Algiers, but the British navy presence ruined them. French-Algerian diplomatic and trade relations intensified after the Congress of Vienna. In 1827, Algier's Dey Hüseyin bin Hüseyin, in an inflamed discussion over a decades-old dispute regarding Algerian wheat

67 Robert Stephens, *Nasser, a Political Biography* (Penguin Books, 1973), 104–108; Adeed Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton University Press, 2003), 160–85.

68 Smith, "America's First Response to Terrorism," 65–69; Bayly, *Imperial Meridian*, 197; McDougall, "Sovereignty, Governance," 142.

69 Julia A. Clancy-Smith, *Mediterraneans. North Africa and Europe in an Age of Migration, c. 1800–1900* (University of California Press, 2012), 1.

70 Paul Mohr, "Politische Probleme im westlichen Mittelmeer", *Meereskunde* 96, no. 12 (1914): 9.

exports of the past that the French side refused to recognize and pay, struck the French Consul Pierre Deval with a fly whisk. The irate French reaction led to what the former Minister of War, Clermont-Tonnerre, called a "just war," which first turned into a blockade of the Port of Algiers.[71] Then, in 1830, after receiving approval from the European great powers, the government decided to seize the city, and it was conquered on July 5, 1830. The occupation was "initiated by King Charles X in 1830 to remedy his wide unpopularity."[72] After the July Revolution, "Citizen King" Louis-Philippe confirmed the conquest. In the proclamation by the French authorities, General Commander de Clauzel tried to reassure: "Inhabitants of the Kingdom of Algiers, your religion, your traditions and customs will be respected. I will accommodate all your complaints." Similar to Napoleon, who proclaimed in 1798 that France had come to Egypt to "rescue the rights of the poor from the hands of their tyrants," the official confirmed the French Kingdom's

> intention to ensure forever the happiness of the peoples whom our arms have removed from a harsh and humiliating yoke, by making reign law and justice, protecting all the good and severely cracking down against the wicked of whatever class they belong. Malicious people have spread rumours offensive to the French character, accusing us of an unjust preference for certain classes of inhabitants. Do not listen to these perfidious insinuations.[73]

The reference in the French message to the various "classes" of inhabitants, in an apparent attempt to plant seeds of suspicion and envy among them according to the ages-old principle of *divide et impera*, was "perfidious" in itself. French explorers had already subdivided the inhabitants of Algiers into *Maures ou Algériens*, *Juifs*, *Turc fins*, *Kabyles ou Arabes des montagnes*, *Nègres*, *Arabes campagnards*, and *Mozabites* (originating from the region of Wādī Mzāb) in 1808, in the farsighted effort of anthropological classification that proved so useful to colonial rule around the world.[74]

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71 "Copie du rapport de Clermont-Tonnerre," *Archives d'Algérie 1830–1960*, ed. Françoise Durand-Evrard and Lucienne Martini (Éditions Hazan, 2003), 81; Rutledge, *Sea of Troubles*, 194–95.

72 Karakatsouli, "French Involvement in the Greek War," 2.

73 "Proclamation de Clauzel aux habitants d'Alger," in *Archives d'Algérie 1830–1960*, ed. Françoise Durand-Evrard and Lucienne Martini (Éditions Hazan, 2003), 89.

74 "Reconaissance générale des villes, forts et batteries d'Alger par le chef de bataillon Boutin" [1808], in *Archives d'Algérie 1830–1960*, ed. Françoise Durand-Evrard and Lucienne Martini (Éditions Hazan, 2003), 27.

In 1834, France decided to formally annex its possessions, which at the time were mostly limited to port cities and coastal regions. In 1832 the Arab leader ʻAbd al-Qādir had proclaimed *jihad* resistance against the French occupation. In the east, the Bey of Constantine, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Sharīf, also resisted, confining the French occupation to a coastal strip. While ʻAbd al-Qādir adhered to the Qādirīyah Sufi order, which had strong ties to Morocco, Aḥmed Bey owed allegiance to the Ottoman Sultan. Perhaps this divergence partly explains why the two most powerful opponents of the French occupation did not unite forces.[75] Algerian resistance led to unstable territorial divisions based on ephemeral treaties and endemic conflict. Meanwhile, French and other European immigrants settled around Algiers but were sometimes driven out by ʻAbd al-Qādir's fighters. In revenge, French forces began to conquer the inland of the former regency in 1840, in subsequent military campaigns that were marred by several setbacks but eventually led to ʻAbd al-Qādir's surrender in 1847 and that of Aḥmad Bey the year after. The Algerian population lost an estimated 300,000 people during these campaigns.[76] French forces employed extreme violence throughout, notably in the 1845 massacre of the Awlād Rīāḥ tribe in the Dahra Mountains (*Jibāl aẓ-Ẓahrah*)—orchestrated by Lieutenant-Colonel Aimable Pélissier—and the brutal crushing of the az-Zāʼāṭishah Revolt in 1849. Resistance endured long after the nominal conquest, exemplified by Fāṭimah Nsūmar's leadership in Kabylia during the 1850s, which highlighted France's tenuous grip on the territory (Figure 5.2).[77] Governor General Thomas Robert Bugeaud "reimagined the razzia as a form of destruction of habitats in which crops, livestock, and people were destroyed. The razzia came to describe a novel form of massacre, yet in a moral sense it rested on the belief that it borrowed from local forms of violence."[78]

Not only did the colonizers carry out horrendous acts of violence, but they also absolved themselves of their actions by projecting the European concept of "barbarism" on their victims. In 1841, the center-left parliamentarian representative of Valognes and intellectual spearhead of liberalism, Alexis de Tocqueville, justified the violence of conquest:

75 Rutledge, *Sea of Troubles*, 223–45.

76 Vermeren, *La France en terre d'Islam*, 51–55; Rutledge, *Sea of Troubles*, 278.

77 Julia Clancy-Smith and Charles D. Smith, *The Modern Middle East and North Africa: A History in Documents* (Oxford University Press, 2014), 31.

78 William Gallois, "Dahra and the History of Violence in Early Colonial Algeria," in *The French Colonial Mind: Violence, Military Encounters, and Colonialism*, ed. Martin Thomas, vol. 2 (University of Nebraska Press, 2012), 6.



FIGURE 5.2 "Algeria, French Colony" in Victor Levasseur's *Atlas Nationale Illustré*, 1845. Gallica-Bibliothèque nationale de France.

> I have often heard men in France whom I respect, but with whom I do not agree, find it wrong that we burn harvests, that we empty silos, and finally that we seize unarmed men, women, and children. These, in my view, are unfortunate necessities, but ones to which any people that wants to wage war on the Arabs is obliged to submit. (…) We shall never destroy Abd el-Kader's power unless we make the position of the tribes who support him so intolerable that they abandon him. This is an obvious truth. We must conform to it or give up the game. For myself, I think that all means of desolating these tribes must be employed. (…) I believe that the right of war authorizes us to ravage the country and that we must do it, either by destroying harvests during the harvest season, or year-round by making those rapid incursions called razzias, whose purpose is to seize men or herds.[79]

Bugeaud insisted that Algeria could be lastingly conquered only "by sword and by the plough." But urbanization and the building of infrastructure also were needed, and to further them the Second Republic sent "twenty thousand

79 Alexis de Tocqueville, "Essay on Algeria" [1841], in *Writings on Empire and Slavery*, ed. Jennifer Pitts (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 70–71; French version: "Travail sur l'Algérie (Octobre 1841)," in Alexis de Tocqueville, *Œuvres, papiers et correspondances: Ecrits et discours politiques*, vol. 3 (Gallimard, 1961), 213–80.

unemployed Parisian workers after the June 1848 revolution."[80] A 1880 map of Algeria shows that the coastal areas and their mountainous hinterland, where most inhabitants of the former regency lived, belonged to the *Territoire Civil*. European settlement projects were mostly created within that area. Given the limited availability of small peasant colonists, "large tracts of Arab land were taken over by European joint stock companies, turning landless Arabs and Berbers into a rural proletariat."[81] The mountain range inland of the high plateaus and the Saharan desert region, less populated, but far more extensive, remained *Territoire Militaire*, the inhabitants of which resisted occupation for several decades.[82] "French atrocities – and occasional reciprocal revenge attacks on European colonists – continued until the final conquest of Algerian Sahara in 1902."[83]

Infiltration and Takeover of Tunisia

However, Algeria alone could not placate French appetites. In 1863, Énault wrote:

> I know nothing more worthy of sympathy and interest than the effort of a prince or a people, held back by centuries-old obstacles from true civilisation, but who presses towards it, who adores it, who has its vivid instinct, so to speak, incorporated and who resolutely walks through all obstacles towards it, thus, to accomplish the great effort of progress that Providence holds in store for all of us. Such is the spectacle that is giving us now a remote statelet, far away from us on the other side of the Mediterranean, on the shores of half-wild Africa, which the historians our predecessors found no better designation for than under the name of a Barbaric State par excellence.[84]

Énault dedicated these words of appreciation to the Beylic of Tunis under the Husaynid dynasty, which, still formally under Ottoman suzerainty, had fallen increasingly under British and French economic and political influence. French influence was exerted from Paris but also from neighbouring

80 Vermeren, *La France en terre d'Islam*, 54–55; "Colonisation," in *Archives d'Algérie 1830–1960*, ed. Françoise Durand-Evrard and Lucienne Martini (Éditions Hazan, 2003), 60–65.

81 Rutledge, *Sea of Troubles*, 279.

82 "Carte de l'Algérie, 1880 – Extension du territoire civil," in *Archives d'Algérie 1830–1960*, ed. Françoise Durand-Evrard and Lucienne Martini (Éditions Hazan, 2003), 9.

83 Rutledge, *Sea of Troubles*, 278.

84 Énault, *La Méditerranée*, 472.

Algiers. Yet in order to further its expansion in North-Africa in the general framework of intra-imperialist equilibria, France had to move carefully. It certainly was not without rivals, who from time to time managed to throw some wrench in its gears. One such rival was Italy. René Pinon recalled in 1904 that Giuseppe Mazzini had already announced in 1838 that North Africa should "return to Italy," as if the future Italian nation-state was the direct heir of the Roman Empire. Numerous Italians had settled in Tunis, not least republican and liberal émigrés who opposed the Bourbon Kingdom of Naples.[85] Pinon suspected that one reason for British favors to nascent Italy was that it meant to build a rival to French power in the Mediterranean. In 1868, the newly founded Kingdom of Italy drew up an agreement with the Bey of Tunis regarding the citizenship of Italians who had settled there as the subjects of expired predecessor states. In Paris the move was interpreted as an Italian claim to Tunis, which was not entirely wrong insofar as Rome would recognize the legitimacy of French colonial rule—the establishment of which in 1881 was interpreted as a "slap in the face" of Italy—only in 1896.[86]

Since its birth in 1861, the Kingdom of Italy had been encouraged by France's rivals to extend its Mediterranean reach. Prussian Prime Minister Bismarck purportedly wrote in 1866 that "The Mediterranean Empire indisputably belongs to Italy, which has Mediterranean seacoasts twice as extensive as France." The creation of that empire, he therefore suggested, should be "the constant thought of Italy, the objective of its ministers, the fundamental concern of the Florence cabinet."[87] Along the same lines, in 1887, Chancellor Bismarck signed a secret German-Italian agreement in which "Germany recognized Italy's right to occupy the province of Tripoli." At the time, Morocco, Tripoli, Sudan, and the Levantine Ottoman provinces were subject to all sorts of open and secret negotiations among European powers regarding future possessions and spheres of influence that could, ideally, be settled without conflict. In this context, "Germany had political, strategic, and economic interests in North Africa, particularly the province of Tripoli," but abstained from pursuing its own colonial ambitions there, instead seeking to transform it

85 Gabriele Montalbano, "'Il nome d'Italiano che abbiamo comune': Pratiche d'italianità nel Beilicato di Tunisi tra ricomposizioni consolari e appartenenza collettiva (1848, 1861)," *in Consoli e consolati italiani dagli stati preunitari al fascismo* (*1802-1945*), ed. Marcella Aglietti et al. (École Française, 2020), 133–51.

86 Gabriele Montalbano, "The 'lost colony': Italian colonial irridentism (1864–1912)," *From the European South* 8, no. 1–2 (2021): 134.

87 René Pinon, *L'Empire de la Méditerranée* (Perrin, 1904), 26–27.

into a "bridgehead to Africa" under Italian oversight.[88] After the 1866 German-Austrian conflict had been settled and cooperation was reestablished, Habsburg observers joined the chorus. According to a Bohemian former volunteer combatant in the ranks of Garibaldi's *Mille*, one of the very reasons for the existence for the Kingdom of Italy was "to gradually extinguish or civilise the half-savage Mohammedan tribes" of Libya.[89] The references to Libya, however, took note of the balance of power in the area, as it focused on the only last Ottoman chunk "left free" for the hesitant Italian imperialist newcomer—which after its resounding defeat by the Ethiopian Empire at Adwa in 1896 would wait until 1911 before moving war on the Ottoman Empire in order to colonize Cyrenaica and Tripoli.

As we have seen in previous chapters, even before colonization the "Barbary Coast" had been subjected to a European commercial penetration that was unofficially partnered with the corsair economy since the seventeenth century. Since then, international treaties and trade agreements had allowed local rulers greater autonomy within the Empire, making them at the same time ever more reliant on European capital and statecraft. In Tunisia, in the early nineteenth century, commerce "faced profound changes, notably around the question of slavery, the end of privateering and the transformed connection between Saharan caravan routes and the Mediterranean." In tune with the reorganization efforts across the empire, Aḥmad Bey I ibn Muṣṭafā, who governed from 1837 to 1855, "was instrumental in the modernisation of the administration of the province and defence of its Ottoman belonging." The reform efforts, which Aḥmad undertook under the lasting impression of the French attempt to colonize Egypt and the actual process of colonization underway next door in Algeria, were not intended to promote foreign influence but, on the contrary, to strengthen the religious and economic resilience of the province, thus reaffirming it as an integral part of the Empire and Caliphate.[90] But in 1857, under Aḥmad's successor Muḥammad II ibn al-Ḥusayn, the reform efforts produced the Tunisian Fundamental Pact, which guaranteed the inhabitants equal rights regardless of worship not just before the law but even before the tax collector, exempting non-Muslims from *dhimmī*. At the same time, foreigners were given the right to acquire property and practise any profession.

88 Suaad Alghafal, *A Bridgehead to Africa: German Interest in the Ottoman Province of Tripoli (Libya) 1884–1918* (De Gruyter, 2021), 13.

89 Eduard Rüffer, *Das Mittelmeer und seine Seestrategie* (Bellmann, 1879), 71.

90 Lafi, "Conceptualising Urbanity," 14–15; M'hamed Oualdi, *A Slave Between Empires: A Transimperial History of North Africa* (Columbia University Press, 2020), 21.

In 1873, during the rule of Muḥammad III al-Ṣādiq, Prime Minister Khayr al-Dīn started a new, but shorter-lived, period of reform.[91] Whatever the intentions behind such reforms were, against the backdrop of European industrialization and aggressive trade expansion, tax cuts, privatization of land, and trade liberalization easily transformed into another lever of pre-colonial subjugation. From 1861, "the nineteenth century's version of the IMF and World Bank pashas arrived in Tunis to exploit its growing financial vulnerability."[92] Given the Beylic's increasing instability, Énault's poetic "sympathy" was outpaced in 1881 by economic "interest," when the "progressive" but heavily indebted state was put under French "protection" as compensation for the British takeover of Cyprus, and was to become a de-facto colony until 1956.[93] Indeed, Great Britain greenlighted the French occupation of Tunis after it had taken over Cyprus three years earlier.

Since the Tunisian territory hosted a "significantly higher developed population than in Algeria," the settler-colonial approach was not applied to the same extent this time. Rather, "efforts were made primarily to settle capitalists who, instead of the small settlers, carried out a 'colonisation with kid gloves'."[94] The kid gloves were off further southward, however, for example during the conquest of Gafsa (Qafṣah) in order to create "a military centre, from which one can dispatch convoys to the territories of all those bellicose tribes of southern Tunisia and the Chotts region."[95] There were still obtuse nomads where the land turned into desert wilderness, who refused to join the march of progress and thus had to be kept in check. This was a subdivision of territory and people similar to that practiced in Algeria.

The Creeping Colonization of Morocco

Morocco had preserved its independence from the Ottoman Empire, and as long as possible the Kingdom also tried to preserve it from western colonization. During the 1859–60 Hispano-Moroccan War, Spain failed to annex Tétouan (*Tiṭwān*) and the port of Tangier (*Ṭanjah*), but it reaffirmed its sovereignty over Ceuta and Melilla while extending control to smaller enclaves

91 Oualdi, *A Slave Between Empires*, 35.

92 Clancy-Smith, *Mediterraneans*, 8.

93 Clancy-Smith and Smith, *The Modern Middle East*, 37–39.

94 Archiv für Geographie (AfG), Leibniz-Institut für Länderkunde, *Mission de Tunisie*, box 296, shelfmark 21, Französische Kolonisationsmethoden in Algerien, Tunesien und Marokko (date of translation February 25, 1942).

95 AfG, *Mission de Tunisie*, box 296 shelfmark 3, *Itinéraire de Soussa à Kairouan* [no date].

around these cities, as well as the Chafarinas Islands. Apart from this minor loss, Morocco successfully maintained its political independence throughout the nineteenth century. Yet, from the perspective of Paris or Toulon, this situation was entirely on the wrong side of history. Pinon lamented in 1904 how "at the western extremity of the African Maghreb, a strange vestige of bygone times, a living anachronism, Morocco, locks itself in its fierce isolation."[96] The French Republic would soon, and with the usual amount of bloodshed and cruelty, drag the country on the shining path of progress.

Yet it would be inadequate to reduce Morocco's colonial history to the period of the French Protectorate imposed on it from 1912 to 1956, and the simultaneous creation of a Spanish protectorate over territories in northern and southern Morocco. Several treaties had exposed the kingdom to foreign influence long before, at least since the seventeenth century. Even then, during rebellions, dynastic disputes, or hostilities with neighbors, domestic actors in Morocco and the Maghreb showed a certain tendency to "establish contact with European powers, seeking military-political support," and "raise money, sign agreements and coordinate hoped-for invasions."[97] This practice gave European powers leverage in Morocco and weakened the country's independence long before formal colonization. After the British conquest of Gibraltar, a trade agreement was drawn in 1721 to secure the garrison's supply of meat and other agricultural products; an exchange of consuls would follow, with Tétouan (*Tiṭwān*) and Tangier (*Ṭanjah*) becoming the main hubs for British trade under treaties that exempted British merchants from taxes and duties. Other treaties ensued, and in 1767, Morocco even signed a treaty with Spain, but relations with the Iberian country remained strained due to the latter's colonial interests.

In 1786, a friendship agreement with the newborn USA was signed, which was important for both sides. While the Americans still had to deal with English obstructionist policies and therefore had difficulty concluding such treaties (they had previously only managed to conclude them with France, Prussia, and Sweden), the sultanate's treasury (*al-Makhzan*) and its military administration had a particular interest in foreign trade because in a significant portion of Moroccan land, especially in its mountainous and desert regions, it was unable to exact tributes at a reasonable cost other than in the form of occasional goodwill gestures by individual tribes or local chiefs. This

96 Pinon, *L'Empire de la Méditerranée*, 24; also, Stephen Jacobson, "Imperial Ambitions in an Era of Decline," in *Endless Empire. Spain's Retreat, Europe's Eclipse, America's Decline*, ed. Alfred W. McCoy et al. (University of Wisconsin Press, 2012), 81.

97 Matar, *Europe Through Arab Eyes*, 74.

was the main reason why "successive Moroccan sultans turned to customs duties, export and import tariffs as the only reliable source of taxation, and this in turn meant establishing friendly trading relationships with the European powers" and the U.S.[98] Given the precarious basis for fiscal revenue, there was an even greater risk of quasi-colonial dependence than in the Ottoman Empire—a potential that would actually become apparent in the nineteenth century.

A lingering colonial subjugation existed since indeed at least the 1840s, if not earlier. Port towns such as Tétouan, Tangier, Larache (*al-ʿAraʾish*), and Mogador (*al-Ṣawīra*) had been exposed to Iberian influence for centuries, in some cases by temporary conquests, and otherwise through the presence of traders and the massive immigration of Moriscos and Sephardim. In the early nineteenth century, during a period of administrative decay for the *Makhzan,* the representatives of foreign trade intensified their contacts with local trade communities to fix problems. In Larache, for example, the Portuguese consul hired Moroccan Sephardic consular agents.[99] One of them, who also corresponded with the Swedish consul, referred to "a lot of quarrels between the Moors and the Christian Portuguese" regarding maritime trade, ransoms, and control of harbor activity.[100] European merchants and their Moroccan protegees became a factor of influence on their own. The port city of Casablanca (*al-Dār al-Bayḍāʾ*) and its agrarian hinterland of Shāwīyah, Dukkālah, and ʿAbdah, rich in quality wool, cattle and cereals, came gradually under the influence of French, British, Italian, Belgian, and other enterprises. As in the playbook that we have already seen at work, the first step consisted of foreign merchants getting hold of not only the local agricultural produce but also the tax revenues extracted from cattle and crops, through cooperation with local merchants, tribal chiefs, tax farming notables, and institutions. Once the business circuit was established, another step consisted of the concession of loans that indebted the wealthy echelons of local society and made them dependent on Western "benevolence."

A French-Moroccan agreement of 1863 exempted French citizens, who had settled in the area, from taxation and legal persecution by Moroccan judiciary;

98 Rutledge, *Sea of Troubles*, 70–77, quotation at 74; see also, Marzagalli, "The United States and the Mediterranean," 54.

99 Jorge Afonso, *The Ahl Al-Kithãb's businesses: economic and religious connections in the Maghrib World (1766–1822)* (Publicações do Cidehus, 2020), 26, accessed June 22, https://books.openedition.org/cidehus/24719.

100 ASDMAE, Regio Consolato Sardo Tangeri, 1818–1872, busta 2, f 5 Corrispondenza in arrivo da Larache, 1820–1821, letters by Isaac Taregano to Swedish consul Jacob Graberg of December 17, 1820, December 11, 1820, and July 18, 1821.

the privileges could be extended to their native protégés and the families of the latter. Similar treaties with Great Britain and Spain followed, until in 1880 the multilateral Convention of Madrid extended the system of foreign privileges and favors to Portugal, Italy, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and the USA. Foreigners were allowed to possess cultivated land, the tax revenue of which was delivered to the consul of their home country, who acted in accordance with the Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[101] In the early 1880s, the Tangier-based French consul general Ladislas Ordega adopted an open interference policy by whipping up a rebellion in the Rif Region that Sultan Ḥasan I struggled to quell. In the meantime, "French forces in southern Algeria were nibbling away at large areas of the huge Saharan region over which Morocco claimed sovereignty." The foundation, in 1890, of the *Comité de l'Afrique Français* was yet another manifestation of the French will to subjugate Morocco.[102] For a short while, these ambitions were curbed by competing European powers, who feared that the French might endanger their own slice of the Moroccan cake.

In 1901, France imposed the Algerian-Moroccan Border Protocol on the highly indebted Morocco, and thus created another legal basis for French "presence." Other treaties ceded "more tribal lands to French control and ownership," forcing the tribespeople either to leave their homes if they wanted to continue being Moroccan, or to accept becoming French subjects "if they wanted to stay in the lands of their birth and ancestry."[103] Successive agreements with France and other powers eroded Morocco's sovereignty ever more rapidly. While Great Britain and France were successful in hindering the Kingdom from accessing the credit of third countries, a 62.5 million Franc loan was granted in 1904, which had to be serviced from the main Moroccan customs revenues.

In 1902, France signed a document of understanding with Italy regarding the division of colonial interests in Morocco and Libya. Two years later, it reached an agreement with Great Britain in which it refrained from interfering with British interests in Egypt in exchange for Britain's recognition of France's "right" to take the Kingdom of Morocco under its own "protection," a "right" that was recognized by Spain in the same year. The diplomatic and military brinkmanship of German Kaiser Wilhelm II, who ostensibly intended to pre-

101 "Right of Protection in Morocco: Convention signed at Madrid July 3, 1880," in *Treaties and other International Agreements of the United States of America*, vol. 1, Multilateral 1776–1917 (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1960), 71–79.

102 Rutledge, *Sea of Troubles*, 385–86.

103 Oussama Youssoufi, "Morocco and France between the 19th and 20th Centuries" (BA diss., Ca' Foscari University of Venice, 2021), 21.

serve Moroccan independence, was successful in 1905, but was surrendered in 1911 when France occupied Rabat and Spain took Larache, al-Qaṣr al-Kabīr, and Aṣīlah. A French-German compromise over reciprocal colonial interests in Africa had made Berlin change their mind, although German nationalist circles considered having ceded "a piece of the Congo colony by no means a sufficient equivalent" for the French gain.[104] In the long run, "the Moroccan international trade had experienced deficits resulting in fatal economic loss and the loss of the Kingdom's political sovereignty, with the authority of the Sultan waning. On March 30, 1912, Sultan 'Abd al-Ḥāfiẓ signed the Treaty of Fez with France, declaring Morocco officially a 'French protectorate within the Sharifian Alaouite Empire'."[105] Many of the Sultan's subjects, however, and in particular the Amazigh tribes, were not ready to surrender to the colonial regime without a fight. Armed resistance against France lasted until 1921 before it was brutally squashed, and the uprising of the Jbālah and Āyt Waryāghar of the Rif region led by Aḥmad al-Raysūnī and 'Abd al-Karīm, who "rebelled against the Spanish occupation and the sultan's forfeiture of sovereignty," began in 1919 and lasted until 1929.[106]

Remoulding the French Mediterranean Metaphor

According to Fernand Braudel, if North Africa ever betrayed the West, it was "long ago, in the eighth century, if not even before the birth of Christ, with the building of Carthage, city of the East."[107] At that time, an oriental Other represented by the Phoenicians had already intruded into genuinely western spaces. A thousand years after their defeat, the oriental Other would again infiltrate the area, this time on the back of horses and camels, instead of

104 Mohr, "Politische Probleme im westlichen Mittelmeer," 17.

105 Youssoufi, "Morocco and France," 25; the author mainly relies here on علال الخديمي ['Allāl al-Khadīmī], التدخل الأجنبي والمقاومة بالمغرب ، 1894–1910 [Foreign Intervention and Resistance in Morocco, 1894–1910] (Ifrīqiyā al-Sharq, 1994), 45–61.

106 Jacobson, "Imperial Ambitions," 87.

107 Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, vol. 2, 757. This passage was not contained in the original edition of Braudel's opus magnum, but inserted in the second edition, published a few years after the Algerian independence. According to Borutta, it should be "read as a backward-looking prophecy," according to which "the French project to colonize Algeria was doomed to fail from the start" because of the indelible Oriental character of the country; the "betrayal," nevertheless, hints at the fact that for Braudel, "after all, North Africa belongs to Europe"; Manuel Borutta, "Braudel in Algier: Die kolonialen Wurzeln der 'Méditerranée' und der 'spatial turn'," *Historische Zeitschrift* 303, no. 1 (2016): 20, 23.

boats. The desert now became a sea of sand, the oases of which were its "fertile islands on which grew the 'eastern civilisation' of Islam'."[108] In Braudel's eyes that *autre Méditerranée* opposed, and at the same time mirrored, the Mediterranean Sea of water. In this way, the Maghreb—that is, Africa's "north" which coincides with the Mediterranean's "south" but literally means "the west"—also became "the east."

As we learned in previous chapters, Braudel's remarks built on already existing geographical and geophilosophical concepts of Europe, the Mediterranean, and Africa. The *Empire de la Méditerranée* also relied on the distinction between North Africa and "Africa proper" divided by that "other Mediterranean" of sand. As Pinon wrote, "African by name, since it is part of the continent called Africa, our Barbary empire is actually Mediterranean" and as such "the extension of Mediterranean France."[109] This view should not be mistaken for a lack of interest in "Africa proper," however; quite the contrary. France sought to extend its "north-south Mediterranean axis" into Central Africa. Under the Third Republic it was planning to build infrastructure that would connect Algeria with Senegal. Declaring Algeria "French soil" could only enhance the legitimacy of similar projects.[110]

As mentioned in Chapter Three, after the Phoenician defeat, the region between Constantine and the Gulf of Sirte became a Roman province, named *Africa Proconsularis*. It is more than just an ironic twist that "Africa," originally the name for a northern province, was stretched out toward the south to cover a whole "dark" continent, only to be eventually distinguished as "Africa proper" from its Mediterraneanized, colonized, Europeanized place of origin. Such was the European defining power of geography, a power that operated arbitrarily, and was mighty enough to sell its arbitrary definitions as scientifically proven natural facts. The numerous twists and inconsistencies it brought about produced incessantly floating borderlines between "us" and "them" that mostly obeyed the geopolitical convenience of the moment.

Similar traits of the Mediterranean metaphor, present since its inception, make it difficult to isolate specific national contributions. It seems impossible to think that France would not remould some of the underlying concepts according to its own needs, yet it is not always easy to separate specific French contributions from the general evolution of Europe's geographical imagination, by which France was influenced in turn.

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108 Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, vol. 1, 186.

109 Pinon, *L'Empire de la Méditerranée*, 19.

110 Perry, "A Shared Sea," 126.

The representation of the Mediterranean as a place of European "homecoming," for example, may have incentivized a certain French flexibility in handling religion. Ironically, the French "Barbary Empire" was to become a sort of *Reconquista* enterprise under the severe watch of French *laïcité*, not just in "civilizational" terms but also religious ones. In 1830, Ḥusayn II Bey of Tunis granted the French consul permission to build a church on the site of ancient Carthage, and this was erected ten years later on the ruins of a Punic temple; during the French Protectorate, a pompous Cathedral was built next to it.[111] The Chappelle de Saint Louis was dedicated to the crusader King Louis IX of France, who died in Tunis in 1270. As Énault observed on seeing the temple, "for us French, a peaceful and sweet memory today replaces all that dark poetry of ancient history."[112] And had not the "Mediterranean World" been the homestead of both Greek-Roman civilisation and Christianity? Yes, it had, and therefore the settlement of mostly Catholic European farmers and town dwellers was also a form of "homecoming." In the North-African homeland of Saint Augustine, Christianity had only been eradicated "by the Almohads during the twelfth century."[113] Apart from Spanish and Portuguese enclaves, "for the first time after centuries Christendom set foot again on the southern shores of the Mediterranean" after the French conquest of Algeria.[114] The *Société des missionnaires d'Afrique* even returned to the evangelization of Muslims. Such efforts were further boosted after 1870 by the Third Republic's decision to foster Algeria's "assimilation."

The political stance of *laïcité* had already allowed for a wide range of theoretically irreconcilable positions during the French expedition to Egypt, and made it possible to put anti-clericalism aside whenever it was deemed useful. This was also true for Islam. The efforts towards imperial integration kept the French colonial mind open even when French diplomacy defined "pan-Islamism as the main enemy in the Mediterranean" during the Mahdist movement.[115] When Algeria became a French department in 1848, Islam was the nation's second religion.[116] French elites "were acutely aware of the fact that imperial expansion was acquiring a more pronounced Mediterranean orientation, but this also implied the empire was becoming exceedingly Muslim in

111 Roua Khlifi, "The Acropolium of Carthage: At the crossroads of culture and history," *The Arab Weekly*, June 17 (2018), 24.

112 Énault, *La Méditerranée*, 488.

113 Vermeren, *La France en terre d'Islam*, 55.

114 Oissila Saadia, *Algérie coloniale, musulmans et chrétiens: le contrôle de l'État (1830–1914)* (CNRS Éditions, 2015), 23.

115 Laurens, "La France et l'Égypte en 1882," 338–41.

116 Vermeren, *La France en terre d'Islam*, 12.

its composition." Intellectuals such as Gabriel Charmes, Paul Laffitte, and the editor of the *Revue du Monde Musulman*, Alfred Le Chatelier, emphasized that its southward expansion meant that the French nation itself had become "a great Muslim power" and an "Islamic nation." Islamic scholars and notables acquired an important function for the colonial administration, as long as they remained loyal, or at least neutral. The nationalization of empire meant that "concepts of Mediterranean Islam and Arab identity were incorporated into articulations of national-imperial identity."[117] A similar concept was still heeded on the eve of the Algerian War in 1954 by the French Minister of Interior, François Mitterrand.[118] To be clear, similar exercises of self-representation meant little for daily life on the ground, where the colonized were mostly Muslims and the colonizers mostly Catholic Christians, but they meant something for the conceptual shape of Mediterranean discourse.[119]

On the whole, the French intellectual elaboration of the *Empire de la Méditerranée*'s meaning, and purpose, remained firmly anchored in the general narrative of the Mediterranean's "world historical role." French plans for expansion, which were accompanied by the rhetoric of "progress" and "rejuvenation," gave expression to liberal and republican professions of faith in western civilisational eschatology, and also left room for more traditional forms of religion. All this happened while the overall view of the "Mediterranean World" conveyed by France remained secular, progressive, and true to the vision that republicanism and geophilosophy had affirmed since the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Albert Camus's 1951 phrase *mais la jeunesse du monde se trouve toujours autour des mêmes rivages* reconfirmed both this heritage and the French intellectual desire to interpret it practically.[120]

Such strong traits of continuity, which in retrospect appear to add to the intrinsic consistency of the Mediterranean metaphor, may however be considered to a certain extent a contingent outcome of French national interest. If truth be told, this interest was a subject of continuous disputes in France itself and therefore not always completely coherent. After the defeat suffered against Prussia in 1870, efforts for building a "Latin Union" among neo-Latin

117 Gavin Murray-Miller, "Mediterranean Imaginaries: Europe, Empire, and Islam in the Nineteenth Century," in *Mediterranean Europe(s): Rethinking Europe from its Southern Shores*, ed. Matthew D'Auria and Fernanda Gallo (Routledge, 2023), 58.

118 Todd Shepard, "Thinking between Metropole and Colony: The French Republic, 'Exceptional Promotion', and the 'Integration' of Algerians, 1955–1962," in *The French Colonial Mind: Violence, Military Encounters, and Colonialism*, ed. Martin Thomas, vol. 1 (University of Nebraska Press, 2011), 302.

119 Saadia, *Algérie coloniale,* 19.

120 Albert Camus, *L'homme révolté* (Gallimard, 1951), 308.

countries of the Mediterranean plus Romania, were reinforced. They were intended to form a French-led counterweight to the growing German power in Europe.[121] Yet they failed to gain full traction, also because of the Spanish lack of interest and the economic and colonial competition with Italy. The potential clash with Italy's imperialist ambitions, for example, meant that the French interpretation of the "Mediterranean World" eventually stuck to settled geophilosophical elements of legitimization. Italy, while looking towards Libya and Tunis, underlined in its own way the Italian contribution to the "return" of "Latin civilisation" to southern Mediterranean shores.[122] If seen from Paris and Toulon, Italy's "Latin" rhetoric, while apparently reconciling itself with the French "cousins'" colonial dominion, conserved a consistent margin of ambiguity with regard to their own colonial ambitions.

In return, a number of French observers therefore strongly refuted Latinist and neo-Romanist interpretations: "There is no 'Latin policy' – Pinon wrote – but there is, to a certain extent, a Mediterranean policy. There is no 'Latin race', but there are certain similarities between the peoples bordering the Mediterranean." The similarity of the temperate climate, the splendor of the sun, the white rocks, and the grey olive trees "have given the Mediterranean peoples certain common traits in physiognomy and character. But from the relations between them, especially when they involve interests, war has been born as often as peace." According to Pinon's view, to make a French *mare nostrum* of the Mediterranean Sea was not a matter of cultural descent or bloodline but one of progressive construction. Only in this way could the sea become a road that "can be easily traversed, in less than thirty-six hours, by steamships" instead of a barrier. The interpretation of the Mediterranean as a natural arena of both encounter and conflict that could be geopolitically moulded in one sense or the other fitted best with the practical interest of French imperial politics. At the same time, it remained faithful to the geophilosophical foundations of the metaphor.[123]

So, we can conclude on this point that if French Mediterranean colonialism was both nationalist and imperialist, it was also, simultaneously, transnational and European. Around the mid-nineteenth century the "Mediterranean Empire" had become a trope of its own, and almost a distinct chapter in the European tale. All its variants were based on the assumption that European civilizational predominance had to be "re"-established in the entire region

121 Lepenies, *Die Macht am Mittelmeer*, 137–56.

122 Nicola Labanca, *Oltremare. Storia dell'espansione coloniale italiana* (il Mulino, 2002), 369–76.

123 Pinon, *L'Empire de la Méditerranée*, 14–15, 19.

once the "Oriental question" was satisfactorily resolved, but disputes surfaced here and there about who precisely should step into the shoes of the Old Romans. Should it be France? Should it be Italy, or even Greece? The national interests behind similar discourses—put forth by Germans when proposing Italy, Russians when suggesting Greece, and the British when quietly accommodating France—were plain to see. Yet their overall foundation rested entirely on western philosophical truisms regarding the meaning and "right side" of history, a circumstance that once again suggests that the material force of ideology should not be underestimated. Only because these beliefs were shared across the board of European intellectual milieus and political cabinets could such otherwise nonsensical discourses acquire relevance as a legitimizing tool of colonialism in international law. The best example of this is perhaps Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations.

European Settler Colonialism and the Mandate System

Before we come back to this highlight of western self-righteous thinking, we should not forget to mention a practical aspect of the French-British-led Mediterranean region building, which was the creation of a settler-colonial reality. The importance of this truly transnational phenomenon appears to be easily overlooked, because of the far greater numbers of transatlantic migration, the partial repatriation of European settlers in the Mediterranean during the decolonization processes after 1950, and the national segmentation of both memory and social costs of repatriation. All peculiarities and differences notwithstanding, the efforts put forth in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Palestine, the Nile Delta, important port cities, and other places were part of this reality. Although economically motivated, they were legitimized by core elements of European ideology, such as the duty before history to spread "civilization," "rights," and "modernity." In several cases the settlement was related to the "homecoming" motives of the Mediterranean metaphor, representing colonization as a sort of "return" of civilization, religion, or race to places of origin or heritage.

Between the early nineteenth and the mid-twentieth century, the native inhabitants of (former) Ottoman-ruled lands and Morocco were therefore required not only to serve European capital accumulation with export crops and tax revenues but also to make space in their homeland for hundreds of thousands of settlers. The immigration was promoted as mitigating Europe's structural problems, such as the demographic pressure on marginal land, urban unemployment, and the looming social conflicts that those distortions threatened to bring about. The colonial appropriation of Mediterranean land

was to absorb, in other words, part of the collateral damage of capitalist industrialization, which in the industrial areas of Western Europe produced poverty among the urban labor reserve army, while in Eastern and Southern Europe, where the extensive farming of export crops was increasing, the living standards of many rural poor were falling beneath the level of subsistence. Settler colonialism in the Mediterranean was therefore a minor part of a broader process that saw millions of Europeans depart from their homelands to find a better fate in former or present European colonies worldwide. At the same time, it served to rebalance the demographic composition of the colonies in terms that it was hoped would stabilize colonial possession.

The process of resettlement on southern and eastern Mediterranean shores had started in the early nineteenth century, after the war against piracy was concluded. Major islands such as Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica, but also smaller ones like Malta, witnessed dynamic demographic growth. In Tunis, for example, "British gunboat diplomacy no longer rescued Christians but instead dumped impoverished island peoples deemed 'surplus' onto a Muslim state." A significant percentage of the staggering urban growth of Alexandria was made of immigrants "from southern Europe and particularly the Mediterranean islands." The same holds for "Beirut, Izmir, Tunis, Algiers, and Tangier, where many resided for generations." Others moved onward toward different destinations, in a continual flow of partially undocumented changes of residence. At the time of the Franco-Italian agreement of 1896, some 55,000 Italians were found residing in Tunis, where they formed the overwhelming majority of European dwellers.[124] According to the Khedivate's official statistics (which are believed to underestimate the phenomenon), approximately 80,000 foreigners were residing in Egypt in 1873, around 60% of whom were in Alexandria. The lingua franca among Europeans in Cairo and Alexandria remained mostly Italian, although there were more "Greeks" (probably Ottoman Greek and Albanian subjects for the most part) and French than Italians living there.[125]

> For more than thirty years past Alexandria has been substantially an European, not an Eastern city; the only Oriental features it possesses being its bazaars, which are by no means fair average specimens of the article, and a population about half Arab, comprising chiefly the labouring and small shopkeeping class. So that Alexandria, like Smyrna and many other cities of the Levant, disap-

124 Clancy-Smith, *Mediterraneans*, 3, 346–47.

125 De Leon, *The Khedive's Egypt*, 18, 427.

> points the traveller freshly arriving in the East, from looking so European resembling rather an Italian than an Eastern town.[126]

Apparently, the foreigners developed a sense not of integration—the requirement North African immigrants are confronted with in Europe in the twenty-first century—but of entitlement and appropriation. The Italian community, for example, found it normal to use the Egyptian public space to debate the political controversies of their homeland. In 1848, when the number of foreign residents was still low, a correspondent wrote from Cairo that "the city or rather the European quarter was in real uproar at the announcement" of the imminent release of a constitution in the Kingdom of Sardinia. In 1860, during the struggle for national unity, it was considered no infringement of the host country's rules to expose foreign flags or affix political announcements in a foreign language "in the busiest places in the city" and organize a demonstration to run through "the main streets of Alexandria."[127]

In Algeria, it was not just the French who followed Victor Hugo's exhortation "Peoples! Take this land. Take it! To whom is it belonging? To nobody. Take this land to God."[128] Among the foreign inhabitants of Algiers in the 1830s, the Spanish were the strongest group after the French, followed by "Tuscans and Sardinians," Maltese, "Germans," "Wurtembergers," English, "Bavarians," "Austrians," "Greeks," and "Jews." Apparently, the immigration efforts of the French authorities were not successful enough with their own citizens, as France was among the European countries with the lowest birth-rates and the weakest demographic pressure on land. Organized efforts were therefore made to recruit, for example, Irish settlers. One project even foresaw setting up new plantations in the province of Oran after the abolition of slavery in the French Antilles. The plan to run them with a workforce imported from India and China, however, was blocked by local opposition.[129]

In the 1920–30s, European immigration to the Maghreb counted for over one million people, of which Algeria, where over 830,000 Europeans had settled, took the lion's share. The most consistent group came from Italy. In the

126 De Leon, *The Khedive's Egypt*, 402.

127 ASDMAE, Consolato Sardo ad Alessandria d'Egitto 1825–1866, busta 7, f Corrispondenza dal Cairo dall'ottobre 1848, lettera Roberto Vernoni a Luigi Cerruti, 24 febbraio 1848; and Legazione Sarda ad Alessandria d'Egitto, 1825–1866, busta 34, f Corrispondenza dell'ex-Consolato Generale di Toscana in Egitto, lettera Consolato toscano a Luigi Gobbi, 9 maggio 1860.

128 Quoted from Vermeren, *La France en terre d'Islam*, 53.

129 "Project d'immigration chinoise," in *Archives d'Algérie 1830–1960*, ed. Françoise Durand-Evrard and Lucienne Martini (Éditions Hazan, 2003), 77; see also 75–76.

French protectorate of Tunis, "according to their own French sources, in 1921 a minority of only 54,000 French, including the military and civil servants, faced a majority of 130,000 Italians."[130] Such numbers of later mostly "naturalized" Italian settlers contradict the idea that the settler-colonial experience was a stranger to Tunisia, where "the growing Italian presence increased pressures to seize the Tunisian state and/or *habus* lands, wreaking havoc in the traditional agrarian society as the world economic crisis struck."[131]

In the mid-1930s, Margret Boveri also reported the settlement of another 120,000 Italians in Morocco and 60,000 in Egypt, along with minor groups in Türkiye, Greece, and the eastern Adriatic regions. Fascism, she stated, turned the demographic factor of this economically driven emigration of a poor unemployed workforce into a form of "proletarian imperialism." The Italian state could use the widespread presence of Italian shopkeepers, farmers, and fishermen as a subtle form of geopolitical influence, even more so as the Italian settlers "do not colonize as a master race, they just settle. (…) They go fishing, they do farming, they are born mechanics and drivers. (…) They mix with the locals, share their same sorrows. They are known as normal people. They come from the Mediterranean and have Mediterranean habits," thus they were not targeted, in Boveri's perception, by the same repulsion that the colonized felt toward the British or the French.[132] Another German observer, a few years later, applauded the Fascist government in defending the Italian rights in Tunis, which "are truly moral rights if arduous pioneering work in the wilderness can confer ownership rights."[133]

Not just imperial ambitions abroad, but also the fear of social unrest at home motivated the Italian authorities' attempts to expand agricultural colonization overseas. "Sicily, which witnesses an extremely intense demographic growth"—the January 1938 minutes of the Palermo Chamber of Commerce read—"has given plenty of industrious labourers to countries unfortunately not ours." Perhaps the disappointment of not possessing enough colonies referred also to faraway places, but certainly it was provoked by the French and British colonies on Italy's Mediterranean doorstep, in particular the "lost colony" of Tunis.[134] The document continued by insisting that "Sicily must not

130 Adolf Dresler, "Italienische Probleme," *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* 4, no. 10 (1927): 880.

131 Clancy-Smith, *Mediterraneans*, 347; *habus* are lands in possession of Islamic charitable trusts.

132 Margret Boveri, *Das Weltgeschehen am Mittelmeer* (Atlantis-Verlag, 1936), 195–96.

133 Günther Herwig, *Kampfplatz Spanien und Mittelmeer* (Verlag Münchener Zeitung, 1939), 24.

134 Montalbano, "The 'lost colony'," 133–36.

remain behind in the noble race for the colonisation of the Empire."[135] At that time, Italy had indeed proclaimed its own "Empire," and on the eve of the Second World War, in addition to the resettlement efforts in East Africa, there were around 120,000 Italian settlers in Libya, including both farmers who had land assigned along the coastal strip, and town dwellers. Around one third of the inhabitants of Tripoli and Benghazi were Italians. The Fascist government planned to transfer other 380,000 settlers to Libya over the next two or three decades.[136]

These policies "transformed the central Mediterranean into an expressway scattering peoples across the Maghrib: the rural dispossessed and *sans travail*, adventurers and carpetbaggers, speculators and investors, missionaries and bourgeois travelers." Apart from missionaries and bourgeois travelers, the other social groups had little stake in the imaginative construction of a "Mediterranean World." According to Julia Clancy-Smith there is little evidence that "a discernible sense of 'Mediterranean-ness' [did] emerge among these various and sundry communities."[137] The metaphor retained its upper and middle-class character.

The Levant was another area targeted for European settler colonialism. As we have seen in previous chapters, apart from the trade-related immigration into port cities, a certain movement of religiously motivated immigration into the Holy Land, which was socially different from medieval crusade patterns, had set in during the early modern period, but the numbers became demographically relevant only in the course of the nineteenth century. Among them, after 1870, were increasingly European Jewish settlers who bought and cultivated land and differed markedly from the native, mostly urban Jews, who were integrated into Ottoman-Arab society and culture.[138] When in 1898 German Kaiser Wilhelm II, on the occasion of his state visit to the Ottoman Empire, visited Palestine, he received speakers from the German Protestant settlers from Wurttemberg as well as the Zionist leader Theodor Herzl, who wanted to represent the interests of tens of thousands of European Jews who had recently settled in the country. In his 1896 book *Der Judenstaat*, Herzl translated his project of a Jewish nation-state into explicit European settler-colonial terms when writing:

135 Archivio Storico della Camera di Commercio di Palermo (CCPA), cat. III b 21, Verbali del Comitato di presidenza, January 17, 1938, Contributo della Provincia alla colonizzazione.

136 Laverle B. Berry, "Historical Setting," in *Libya: A Country Study*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz (United States Government, 1989), 30.

137 Clancy-Smith, *Mediterraneans*, 97, 347.

138 Khalidi, *The Hundred Years' War*, 4–5, 18–20.

> If His Majesty the Sultan gave us Palestine, we could undertake to completely regulate Turkey's finances. For Europe, we would form a part of the wall against Asia there, providing an outpost of culture against barbarism. As a neutral state, we would remain connected with all of Europe, which would have to guarantee our existence.[139]

Herzl had traveled to Palestine to ask the Kaiser for German support for his plans to establish a "Jewish homeland" there under a "German protectorate." The Kaiser's lukewarm response would make him redirect the search toward other, notably British, great-power sponsorship.[140] The following year, the Third Zionist Congress in Basel discussed the purchase of around 50 acres land in Palestine and the "establishment of a Jewish colony and a Jewish Agricultural College" as another step to "the re-establishment of Judea as an independent State."[141] At the Basel meeting, the delegates pondered the financial and geopolitical aspects of their project. They were aware that their colonization effort could be in conflict with great-power interests. Delegate Davis Trietsch urged caution:

> I would like to warn against using the expression "Palestine and Syria"; in other places it even says "Syria and Palestine" – Palestine yes, Syria not. (…) The parts of Syria bordering on Palestine are the Christian autonomous province of Lebanon, whose Christian autonomy is guaranteed by France, England and Russia, and the urban area of Damascus, which is too important to Turkey for us to be able to get it in the foreseeable future. So we'd better not speak of Syria, from whose other parts we are separated by these areas.[142]

The objections of Trietsch, who was thinking of expanding Jewish colonization towards northern Sinai and Cyprus instead of Syria, at least "in the foreseeable future," met with vehement protests from other delegates.

During the late period of the Ottoman Empire and the First World War, France, and in particular Great Britain, intervened in what western scholars of geopolitics began to call the "Middle East" by simultaneously leveraging the Zionist and Arab nationalist movements. In 1914, the case of ʿAzīz ʿAlī al-Miṣrī,

139 Theodor Herzl, *Der Judenstaat. Versuch einer modernen Lösung der Judenfrage* (Breitenstein, 1886), 29.

140 Hans Lebrecht, *Die Palestinänser. Geschichte und Gegenwart* (VMB, 1982), 29–30.

141 "Conference of Zionists Elect Delegates at Their Meeting in Baltimore. Will colonize Palestine," *New York Times*, June 20, 1899, 3; the word "State" is capitalized in the original.

142 *Stenographisches Protokoll der Verhandlungen des III. Zionisten-Congresses. Basel 15. bis 18. August 1899* (Verlag Verein Erez Israel, 1899), 232.

an officer in the Ottoman Army who had taken part in the Cyrenaica resistance against Italy but then fallen out with the leadership of the Young Turks as a partisan of the Arab Awakening, was sentenced to death and then pardoned under the pressure of mass protests. This was perhaps the first case of Pan-Arab nationalist mass mobilisation. "His trial had shaken the Arab world more profoundly, perhaps, than any single act of Turkish tyranny and greatly hardened the Arab will to freedom, for it had moved the masses as well as the thinkers."[143] Arab mass opposition against Ottoman rule was considered a resource in the British foreign office, which favored Arab "independence" by supporting the Hashemite Sharif of Mecca, al-Ḥusayn ibn ʻAlī, in particular through the services of the spy Thomas Edward Lawrence ("of Arabia").

When the Ottoman Empire chose to ally with Germany and Austria during the World War, Great Britain threw its weight behind the Arab national insurgency in the Arabian Peninsula, Palestine, and Syria, which was indeed critical in deciding the battle against the Central Powers in the bloody and famine-stricken West Asian theater, where it culminated in the conquest of Damascus in 1918. At the same time, however, a secret British-French agreement laid down in May 1916 by the diplomats Mark Sykes and Georges Picot projected the division of the vast Ottoman provinces between Sivas, Akaba, Tripoli, and Basra into French and British spheres of influence, partly divided by lines drawn with a ruler right across millennia-old cultural and social realities. Furthermore, on November 2, 1917, in a response addressed to Lion Walter Rothschild, the British Foreign Secretary Balfour reassured the Zionist movement that His Majesty's government would view the establishment of "a national home for the Jewish people" with favor, and use "their best endeavours" to achieve the goal, the Arab leaders' protest notwithstanding. As a result of the world war, several British-influenced "independent" monarchies were erected in the "Middle East," and Palestine became a British colony, Syria and Lebanon French colonies. Like others in Africa and Asia, these colonies were no longer called "colonies" under international law but "mandatory territories" according to Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations. The latter determined that their native inhabitants were people "not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world" and were therefore to be guided, for the time being, by such civilized nations as France and Great Britain.[144]

143 George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening. The Story of the Arab National Movement* (Lippincott, 1939), 121.

144 *The Covenant of the League of Nations*, 1924, The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy, Yale Law School, accessed March 27, 2017, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/leagcov.asp#art22; David Fromkin, *A Peace to End all Peace: The*

Although historian Édouard Driault would represent the 1920 establishment of the French mandate over Syria and Lebanon as a "delicate" endeavor, alleging that Westminster did "not love" to see French rule established there, the British-French understanding proved sufficiently solid to put it into practice. Driault also suggested that "the difficulties of the government of Syria depend on the extreme ethnic complexity of the country," apparently once again favoring the usual colonial strategy of division. Yet, as he had to admit in the following pages, "the Syrian youth immediately demonstrated its most intransigent aspirations." The Great Syrian Revolt of 1924–25, which saw Sunni, Druze, Alawite, and Christian Syrians united in opposing colonial rule, was bloodily repressed by French troops.[145] The tactics of sectarian division continued to be applied to Lebanon, in particular in alliance with the Maronite elites. "Overall, French policy in the Levant entailed creating a privileged relationship with the non-Sunni religious communities to diminish the wider regional weight of Sunni demographic strength."[146] This was, and still is, western "reasoning" about "Middle Eastern complexities."

In Mandatory Palestine, the British government incentivised "ethnic" division by favoring or at least allowing mass immigration in the spirit of the 1917 declaration. In 1936, the Jewish population had grown to more than 380,000, and ten years later to more than 600,000; at that time, Jews represented almost one third of the total population. Edward Said has put the colonization of Palestine in the wider historical context of Europe's Mediterranean colonialism by recalling Lamartine's voyage of 1833. "Although in the *Voyage* proper he had detailed numerous encounters with Arab peasants and town dwellers in the Holy Land, the *Resume* announced that the territory was not really a country (presumably its inhabitants not 'real' citizens), and therefore a marvellous place for an imperial or colonial project to be undertaken by France." Similarly, Zionist leaders liked to present Palestine as almost uninhabited and when they took notice of the local population, they tended to theorize a "process of expropriation and the removal of the poor."[147] Later

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Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East (Owl, 1989), 286–88; Joseph A. Massad, *Colonial Effects: The Making of National Identity in Jordan* (Columbia University Press, 2001), 102–104; Clancy-Smith and Smith, *The Modern Middle East*, 113–18; Khalidi, *The Hundred Years' War*, 11, 23–25.

145 Driault, *La Question d'Orient*, 153–55.

146 Jennifer M. Dueck, "Religious Rivalry and Cultural Policymaking in Lebanon under the French Mandate," in *The French Colonial Mind: Violence, Military Encounters, and Colonialism*, ed. Martin Thomas, vol. 1 (University of Nebraska Press, 2011), 170.

147 Edward Said, *The Question of Palestine* (Vintage 1980), 9, 13; also, Khalidi, *The Hundred Years' War*, 6.

settler leaders, like David Ben-Gurion, were more blunt in admitting: "If I was an Arab leader, I would never make terms with Israel. This is natural; we have taken their country."[148]

Inflowing settlers of the Mandate period had diverse social backgrounds and ideological motives. By far not all were motivated by a "return" in terms of Deuteronomy 7, according to which once upon a time the chosen people had been ordered to taketh the land away from others whom they were told to devote "to complete destruction." On the whole, similar evocations were still outweighed by the originally secular nationalist motivation inherent to Zionism. When political and racist persecution in Germany, and not just there, became an additional driver of Jewish immigration, the idea of building a homeland refuge gained even more traction.

However, to a certain extent, the idea of refuge accentuated the differences between the radicalized wing of Zionism ready to work toward the establishment of a Jewish nation-state by all means, including terrorist ones, and Jewish intellectuals like Albert Einstein who, while advocating a homeland refuge in Palestine, opposed the idea of building a Jewish state there. He considered such a project incompatible with the "first and most important necessity" to find "a modus vivendi with the Arab people."[149] Einstein's view was shared on the ground by a consistent minority of immigrants. Hans Lebrecht, a left-wing German who fled to Palestine in 1938 when the Gestapo was on his heels, recalled that most fellow settlers came "from Poland, Russia, Ukraine, Germany, you name it. The Fellahin, who were struggling for their native land and rural traditions, were presented to them as savage Arab Barbarians who, fomented by their Sheikhs and Atamans, and by communists, were ready to pull out their knife against all Europeans, Jews, and any form of western progress."[150] To stonewall the project against all attempts at finding a "modus vivendi" that might arise among the settlers themselves, the nationalists leveraged the idea of progress, much in tune with other western, in particular French, colonial discourses.

In Edward Said's view, the settler-colonial "Zionist project for, and conquest of, Palestine was simply the most successful and to date the most protracted of many such European projects since the Middle Ages." When the British mandate expired in May 1948, the State of Israel was proclaimed. For many months,

148 Quoted by Joseph A. Massad, *The Persistence of the Palestinian Question* (Routledge, 2006), 5.

149 Fred Jerome, *Einstein on Israel and Zionism: New Enriched Edition* (Baraka Books, 2024), 77.

150 Lebrecht, *Die Palestinänser*, 93.

the proclamation had been preceded by acts of terror and ethnic cleansing like the one denounced in the *New York Times* in an open letter signed by Jewish personalities such as Einstein and Hannah Arendt: "On April 9, terrorist bands attacked this peaceful village [of Dayr Yāsīn], which was not a military objective in the fighting, killed most of its inhabitants – 240 men, women, and children – and kept a few of them alive to parade as captives through the streets of Jerusalem." The signatories condemned that "a large segment of America supports Fascist elements in Israel," which they considered leading the process.[151] The new state extended its territory to roughly 78 percent of Palestine, after "approximately 780,000 Arab Palestinians were dispossessed and displaced" in a process that Palestinian collective memory recalls as "the catastrophe" (*al-Nakbah*).[152]

Toward De-Colonization

The end of British colonial rule in Palestine was among the changes driven by the surge of the anti-colonial endeavors that intensified during and after the Second World War. The forces of Great Britain and *France libre* intervened in Syria and Lebanon during the war to build up an Allied Mediterranean and Middle East counter offensive against the Axis powers. "For de Gaulle, it was a question of restoring the independence and integrity of France *and its empire*; at the same time, and contradictorily, to ensure the support of Syria and Lebanon he promised these two countries an independence" under French tutelage.[153] Once the forces of Vichy were defeated, *France libre* and the Provisional Government of Liberated France tried to backtrack, but the weak French military presence, local opposition, and British pressure made the French leader Charles de Gaulle give in. In Lebanon the French Mandate was terminated in 1943 through an unwritten national pact concerning the distribution of the highest constitutional offices between the four main confessional groups. France conceded only after an unsuccessful act of obstruction aimed at prolonging its rule. Syria was formally declared independent in 1946, again after De Gaulle's hesitancy to withdraw his troops—who committed one last blood bath in Damascus in May 1945—had finally been overcome. In 1946, the British mandate in Jordan also ended.[154] Italy dragged their feet but had to hand over

151 Jerome, *Einstein on Israel*, 194.

152 Said, *The Question of Palestine*, 10–11; also, Khalidi, *The Hundred Years' War*, 81–87, 259 and Clancy-Smith and Smith, *The Modern Middle East*, 181–91.

153 Bernard Ravenel, *Méditerranée: Le Nord contre le Sud?* (Éditions L'Harmattan, 1990), 39, emphasis in the text.

154 Tibawi, *A Modern History of Syria*, 373–78.

Libya to an allied administration that in 1951 would grant the country formal "independence" under British tutelage, which lasted until the late sixties.

Egypt had become a constitutional monarchy under British tutelage in 1922, which was overthrown 30 years later by the Free Officers Movement. The country became a republic and, after a period of infighting between the revolutionary leaders, Gamal Abdel Nasser (Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir) became its president. Egypt definitively freed itself from colonialism only after the departure of British troops from the Suez Canal Zone in 1956, the same year when the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium Agreement of 1899 was ended and Sudan, Tunisia, and Morocco also became independent (Spain retreated from southern Morocco two years later). In 1958, Nasser's increasing Pan-Arabist orientation and popularity in the Arab world led to the formation of the United Arab Republic between Egypt and Syria, from which the latter seceded in 1961.

When Cyprus achieved its imperfect independence in 1960, and Malta in 1964, Great Britain, while upholding a military presence, reduced its Mediterranean possessions to Gibraltar and the Cypriot "sovereign" military bases of Akrotiri and Dhekelia. From a military and geostrategic point of view, the heritage of European colonial power in the Mediterranean was preserved by the foundation of the U.S.-dominated North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 1949, which included France, post-fascist Italy, and still-fascist Portugal among its founding members, before extending also to Greece and Türkiye in 1955. NATO and some of its member states created important military infrastructure in the Mediterranean capable of projecting force in Africa and Asia.

As the U.S.-guided NATO took over the strategic role of the former European colonial powers, decolonization in the Mediterranean partly became a process of controlled demolition. Not always, however, did the American supervision play out smoothly enough to avoid conflict with the declining empires. This could be seen during the Suez Crisis, but also in North Africa, where the USA had the "intent to replace France" when it designated the area a new part of its own system of global supremacy. Within a similar framework, the conservation of at least a part of the *Empire de la Méditerranée* became a daring enterprise. On paper, NATO's strategic control over the Western Mediterranean was entrusted to France, whose naval forces relied on the bases of Toulon, Marsá al-Kabīr near Oran, and Bizerte (*Binzart*) in Tunisia. But those forces had to act under the American supreme command of the Allied Forces in Southern Europe stationed in Naples from 1951, whereas the naval branch of these forces was stationed in British Malta one year later. As colonial war in "Indochina" was absorbing its energies, France had only poor means at its

disposal to contrast those developments. In 1956, it gave up on Morocco, Tunisia, and the Suez Canal.[155]

France was not ready to give up on Algeria, however, and not only for economic and strategic reasons. Deep-rooted traditions of missionary universalism, which could be traced back, once again, to the First Republic's short-lived annexation of Egypt during the revolutionary period, made decolonization difficult to swallow. The first result of the uprising in November 1954 under the leadership of the Algerian National Liberation Front was hasty but fruitless attempts at reform.[156] The second was a brutal but unsuccessful war of repression that cost the lives of hundreds of thousands of Algerians, soldiers, and colonists, and in which the ostensive defence of "human rights" was once again substantiated by widespread cruelty and torture.[157] Yet the desperate effort to keep a slice of African soil "French" had to confront worldwide solidarity with the Algerian anti-colonial struggle. In 1961, France lost its Bizerte naval basis after a three-day battle with Tunisian forces and mediation attempts by the late UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld.[158] The imperial retreat from Algeria arrived in 1962 after the Evian-les-Bains accords. The Algerian War "consecrated the victory of Algerian nationalism and—apart from the Palestinian problem—of the process of decolonisation in the Mediterranean."[159]

2 Other Nations' Mediterranean Fantasies

That France had been the leader in forging the Mediterranean discourse did not hinder other European nations from making the "Mediterranean World" a

155 Ravenel, *Méditerranée*, 47–50.

156 Shepard, "Thinking between Metropole and Colony," 298–323; Freda Mookerjee, "Frankreich und Algerien," *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* 29, no. 41 (1958): 41–54.

157 Martin S. Alexander and John F.V. Keiger, "France and the Algerian War," in *France and the Algerian War, 1954–62: Strategy, Operations and Diplomacy*, ed. Martin S. Alexander and John F.V. Keiger (Frank Cass, 2002), 1–32; see also Clancy-Smith and Smith, *The Modern Middle East*, 216–21; and Raphaëlle Branche, *La torture et l'armée pendant la guerre d'Algérie 1954-1962* (Gallimard, 2016).

158 Ravenel, *Méditerranée*, 49–52; Maurin Picard, "Missing Link in a UN Cold Case?," *Consortium News*, April 21, 2022, accessed April 25, 2022, https://consortiumnews.com/2022/04/21/missing-link-in-a-un-cold-case/; إسماعيل دبش [Ismāʿīl Dibish] (1962–1954) الثورة الجزائرية السياسة العربية والمواقف الدولية تجاه [Arab Politics and International Attitudes Towards the Algerian Revolution, 1954–1962] (Dār Hūmah, 1999), 21, 82, 118; I thank Nawal Petri Diab for language assistance.

159 Ravenel, *Méditerranée*, 51.

piece of evidence for their own existence, as anointed by history. In various ways, the Mediterranean was one of the most powerful European tokens of national self-legitimization, precisely because it had been accorded such a central role by the European narrative. As the place where it had all begun, its remembrance assumed a nostalgic flavor. This was true even for distant countries such as Finland, which now discovered that it had for centuries looked "toward the South, to western and central Europe, but also toward the Mediterranean."[160] Once Finland won its independence it swiftly invested in research into ancient history and classical archaeology in Rome and other sites of the "Mediterranean World." This was the best way to document its "Europeanness." Most of the other distant European countries, with varying intensity, did the same.

During the nineteenth century, the boundaries between old-style dynastic power politics and nationalistic colonial expansion driven by capitalist greed remained fluid. The traditional element persisted even in the fully industrialized, financialized, and imperialist United Kingdom. Conversely, a foreign policy driven by industrialists' and bankers' economic interests was not foreign to the neo-absolutist imperial Austria. The Tsarist Empire offers another example. Since a Russian fleet sailed from the Baltic to the Mediterranean in 1770 to erect a short-lived "Archipelagic Principality" on Aegean islands and instigate anti-Ottoman revolts in the Peloponnese, Egypt, and the Levant, Russian interests in the Mediterranean had become manifest. Russia expanded in several directions at the Ottomans' expense, competing with the British. After the war on the northern and western coasts of the Black Sea was decided in Russia's favor, and many Greeks from the Ottoman Empire migrated to Taganrog, Crimea, and Novorossiya, "what we might justly call a 'special relationship' between Greece and Russia developed."[161] This relationship was reinforced by the Russian-leaning administration of the Republic of the Seven United [Ionian] Islands from 1800 to 1807, which helped Greek patriotism develop. Russia's position strengthened further with Greek independence, but the subtle equilibrium maintained with Great Britain during the Restoration collapsed in the Crimean War, ending in Russia's restitution of Kars to the Sultan and Southern Bessarabia to Moldavia, alongside tighter Anglo-French control over Ottoman affairs. Different in its ties to Christian Orthodoxy—"Russian Byzantine studies grew out of preoccupation with national history and Slavic

160 Tuomo Melasuo, "Finland in the Mediterranean," in *Mediterranean Policies from Above and Below*, ed. Isabel Schäfer and Jean-Robert Henry (Nomos, 2009), 155–56.

161 Gallant, *The Edinburgh History of the Greeks*, 324.

studies rather than classical Greece and Rome"[162]—Russia nonetheless shared Europe's Mediterranean nostalgia.

Russia's "deeply religious rulers would always believe they had a fundamental duty to re-take Constantinople for Christianity and liberate the conquered Greek, Balkan and Levantine subjects of the Sultan."[163] Between 1768 and 1917, this deep-seated conviction ideologically underpinned the Tsarist Empire's conflicts with the Ottomans. Yet Russian Byzantinism hardly contemplated colonial expansion, especially since Russian ambitions aligned with Greek religious and nationalist expectations. Kosmas the Aetolian, a proto-nationalist religious figure deemed an instigator by Ottoman and Venetian authorities, was executed in 1779 after being convicted as a Russian agent. Revivified medieval prophecies foretelling that Constantinople's restitution to Greek Orthodoxy would occur when the petrified Emperor Constantine XI Palaiologos resurrected "and/or when a 'fair-haired nation' (commonly associated with the Russians) come to assist the enslaved Greeks, were very popular throughout the period of the Ottoman rule."[164] These visions mirrored Russian geopolitical concepts. Scholars like Vladimir Lamanskiy emphasized "that the 'Greco-Slavic world' was a cultural unit which should be studied as a separate and independent historical entity."[165] Russia's Mediterranean ambitions centered on reviving this ideal.

So, the Russian geopolitical dream of "return" was spun in terms of a Pan Slav-Greek alliance to be restored to life from Ottoman ashes—even though the various competing national movements in the Balkans and Greece were increasingly distinguishing between Pan-Slavism and Pan-Orthodoxy.[166] In the 1870s, on the eve of another fierce Russian-Turkish conflict, the outspoken Slavophile intellectual Nikolai Danilevskij claimed that Constantinople, "once freed and transformed into a real Tsargrad," should become the capital of a Pan-Slav Union, a tight associate of which, the Greek Kingdom, would eventually expand to "all of the Aegean Archipelago, Rhodes, Crete, Cyprus, and the Coasts of Asia Minor and the Aegean Sea." The Greek allies were destined to dominate trade in the Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean, given that their "prosperity of glorious times" had also been based on trade. The alliance was seen as the "only form under which the Eastern Roman Empire can be resur-

162 Diana Mishkova, *Rival Byzantiums: Empire and Identity in Southeastern Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2023), 80; see also 39–42.

163 Rutledge, *Sea of Troubles*, 91.

164 Efstathios Kessareas, "'Signs of the times': Prophecy belief in contemporary Greek Orthodox contexts," *Social Compass* 70, no. 1 (2023): 77–78.

165 Mishkova, *Rival Byzantiums*, 81.

166 Gallant, *The Edinburgh History of the Greeks*, 161.

rected." Visions like these did not necessarily inspire every single practical decision made in the St. Petersburg Ministry of Foreign Affairs but were influential throughout Russian society. According to Danilevskij, Constantinople had been "the aim of the aspirations of the Russian people from the dawn of our statehood."[167]

Even in Danilevskij's view, however, the Mediterranean, which was home to the "first and second Rome," remained distant from the "third" one, Moscow, which—the imperial capital on the Baltic Sea notwithstanding—was confirmed as the very kernel of Russia. The "return" in which the projection of Russian power toward the Mediterranean was wrapped had a spiritual dimension rather than a territorial one. Delegating to Greece a substantial share of Russia's Mediterranean mission probably had much to do also with geopolitical pragmatism. Yet it was not necessarily counterproductive in a cultural sense, as distance from an object of yearning upholds a nostalgic tension within national sentiment. This confirmed the Mediterranean's function, especially within the imagination of geographically more distant nationhood, as a place of unfulfilled desire.

The latter observation likewise applies to other cases, the most prominent of which was the German one. Modern-German national myths, since their inception in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, made numerous references to Greek-Roman classical antiquity and medieval Christianity. Johann Gottlieb Fichte was a fellow philosopher of Hegel and Krause, who argued that the German language, unlike other neo-Germanic and neo-Latin languages, had conserved its particular metaphysical depth "ever since it first issued from the force of nature," a depth that had been equalled only by Classical Greek, a language that had succumbed to time.[168] The German philologist Karl Otfried von Müller deemed the Dorians an invading Aryan tribe, and the writer Hermann Joseph Müller suggested that the ancient Greeks were altogether of Northwest European origin.[169] In the later nineteenth century,

167 Translated excerpts from Nikolay Yakovlevich Danilevsky, *Россия и Европа* [1871], in Basil Dmytryshin, *Imperial Russia: A Source Book, 1700–1917* (Dryden Press, 1974) 329, 333–34.

168 Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation* [1808] (Open Court Publishing, 1922), 68.

169 Karl Ottfried Müller, *Geschichten Hellenischer Stämme und Städte: Zweiter Band: Die Dorier, Erste Abtheilung* (Joseph Max und Komp., 1824); Hermann Müller, *Das nordische Griechenthum und die urgeschichtliche Bedeutung des nordwestlichen Europas* (Kirchheim, Schott & Thielmann, 1844); see Wiedemann, "Cradle, Frontier, and Contact," 76–99; on the Aryan myth, Matthew D'Auria and Fernanda Gallo, "The Ideas of Europe and the (Modern) Mediterranean," in *Mediterranean Europe(s): Rethinking Europe from its Southern Shores*, ed. Matthew D'Auria and Fernanda Gallo (Routledge, 2023), 10–11.

the interpretation of Roman History mixed with quarrels over the legal and constitutional foundations of the new German nation state.[170] During the early decades of the twentieth century, the admiration for Roman culture and Greek antiquity was upheld by the members of *George-Kreis*, who promoted the literary and artistic image of a Mediterranean strand of Germanness.[171] The picture was completed by a Mediterraneanist reading of Emperor Frederick II's life and deeds by Ernst Kantorowicz, who extended the "secret" Mediterranean roots of true Germanness to the Middle Ages.[172] As Margret Boveri, a celebrated journalist before and after 1945, would gloss: "In Friedrich II we Germans have perhaps the purest embodiment of the medieval Mediterranean man. He was Staufer, he was Norman, he was Sicilian and educated in Arabic scholarship." The "German" Frederick represented "the synthesis of East and West, which blossoms once in the struggle with the whole world and in the embracing of all ideas in the world, only to then quickly pass away."[173] This was another national poetic variant of Mediterranean nostalgia.

European Coastal Countries

According to essentialist standards, one would expect to see the "Mediterranean World" more straightforwardly used as a means of national self-legitimization by nations directly bordering the sea. Those among the rim countries who saw themselves as Europeans did indeed rely on it but without anyone else reaching French levels by any standard or measure. In all European geographic divisions, close or far, the claim of possessing Mediterranean roots was a non-exclusive derivative of the Europeanist legitimization of their own national peculiarities.[174] Within this context internal and external views intersected, and the transnational mixture of inside and outside attributions became relevant to all nation building, not least for the very "Mediterranean cradle of western civilization."

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170 Alfred Heuß, *Theodor Mommsen und das 19. Jahrhundert* (Steiner, 1996), 189–219.

171 George-Kreis was an influential German intellectual circle between 1898 and 1933, led by poet Stefan George; see Barbara Stiewe, *Der "Dritte Humanismus": Aspekte deutscher Griechenrezeption vom George-Kreis bis zum Nationalsozialismus* (De Gruyter, 2011).

172 Ernst Kantorowicz, *Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite* (Georg Bondi, 1927).

173 Boveri, *Das Weltgeschehen am Mittelmeer*, 47; the author was awarded two high orders of the German state: *Kriegsverdienstmedaille* in 1941 and *Bundesverdienstkreuz* in 1970.

174 Gerard Delanty, "Die Transformation nationaler Identität und die kulturelle Ambivalenz europäischer Identität," in *Kultur-Identität-Europa*, ed. Reinhold Viehoff and Rien T. Segers (Suhrkamp, 1999), 272.

At the time of the Greek Revolt and its aftermath, national self-understanding incorporated the Byzantine projection of an Orthodox commonwealth. Politician and historian Konstantinos Schinas emphasized that, among all predecessor states, only Byzantium had both language and religion in common with modern Greece. In the 1840s, Ioannis Kolettis proposed a "Great Idea" according to which all Greek-inhabited lands should be gathered into one nation. His *Μεγάλη Ιδέα* leveraged history, culture, and "race" rather than religion, nevertheless foreseeing Constantinople as the future capital of the great-Greek nation.[175] A competing strand of national self-understanding relied on neo-Hellenism, which "as a cultural construction of western civilisation was restricted by philhellenes to the revival of modern Greece"; as a consequence, "the rejection of Byzantium along with all the other historical periods between the classical age and the Greek revolt in 1821 was unavoidable."[176] Later in the century, historians tried to reconcile both ideas by proposing forms of nationhood that "rested on an indigenous Greek culture originating in the Byzantine context that owed its development to the geographic and climatic specificities of the Greek peninsula and, more widely, the eastern Mediterranean World."[177] This conceptualization of Greek nationhood not only sought to legitimize the quest for more substantial slices in the impending partition of the Ottoman Empire but also to affirm exclusive national rights over classical Greece against the cosmopolitan inheritance claims of western philhellenism.

Both ideas played an important and, to a certain extent, unifying role in Greek nation-building after independence, despite the conflict between parties that looked to Russia, England or France as models and supporters. The *Megali Idea*—the vision of uniting all Greeks living within the territory of the former Byzantine Empire—was fundamentally compatible with both historical references, as was the policy of gradual territorial expansion at the Ottoman Empire's expense, pursued until the First World War. This process "brought the Megali Idea closer to realization than ever before."[178]

In the twentieth century, after the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne spelled the end of the most far reaching hopes of a Greater Greece, several Greek intellectuals

175 Mishkova, *Rival Byzantiums*, 43–45.

176 Antonis Liakos, "The Construction of National Time: The Making of the Modern Greek Historical Imagination," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 16, no. 1 (2001): 32.

177 Effi Gazi, Georgios Giannakopoulos, and Kate Papari, "Rethinking Hellenism: Greek Intellectuals Between Nation and Empire, 1890–1930," *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 39, no. 1 (2021): 172; also, Mishkova, *Rival Byzantiums*, 89–91.

178 Gallant, *The Edinburgh History of the Greeks*, 324; also, 108–116, 160–71.

turned to Hellenism once again "to rethink Greek identity and Greece's place in Europe and/or the West" and proposed the country's culture as an example for "humanism of the modern era."[179] We can thus see how Greek views of the Mediterranean and themselves remained not unaffected by geopolitical changes. On the whole, however, they apparently remained focused on the areas of Greek settlement and influence in the Black Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean, thus resembling a Hellenic or Greek-Orthodox "World" rather than a "Mediterranean World" of the French imprint. Wherever the modern Greeks were conceived of as "the sole legitimate heirs to the classical heritage,"[180] we might even say that a supporting pillar of the "Mediterranean World" was taken away.

Only two other European countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea would join alongside France the colonization of the "opposite" shores: Italy and Spain. The latter was an old colonial power, whose imperial perspectives had been Atlantic-centered since the fifteenth century, although the country had a mighty maritime presence in the western part of the Mediterranean until the eighteenth century. Paul Mohr, a German observer, wrote in 1914 that "Spain as a Mediterranean power has surprisingly paid little attention to the Mediterranean throughout its history."[181] During the process of transformation from empire into a nation-state, Spaniards remained conflicted "when it came to their historic identity and culture."[182] Driven by a desire to increase Spain's regional influence, elements of Mediterranean Africa were also grafted onto national symbolism. Some pro-colonialist politicians and intellectuals called *Africanistas* went so far as to assert that an "ethnic kinship" and "racial mixing" stemming from "Celtic migrations across the Straights of Gibraltar coupled with the Arab invasions of the middle ages" had created "Spain's cultural and ethnic hybridity as a Mediterranean society." This conceptualization was convenient for projects of colonial conquest in the Maghreb region.[183] On the other hand, when such conquest finally occurred, the Spanish academic realm would fall short in delivering an adequate narrative, leaving "the Spanish Protectorate of Morocco without a proper historical foundation."[184] To Mohr,

179 Gazi, Giannakopoulos and Papari, "Rethinking Hellenism," 163, 177.
180 Gazi, Giannakopoulos and Papari, "Rethinking Hellenism," 172.
181 Mohr, "Politische Probleme im westlichen Mittelmeer," 29.
182 Murray-Miller, "Mediterranean Imaginaries," 59.
183 Murray-Miller, "Mediterranean Imaginaries," 61–62.
184 Margarita Díaz-Andreu, "The archaeology of the Spanish Protectorate of Morocco," *African Archaeological Review* 32 (2015): 63.

it appeared that "Spain in North Morocco looks more like a subtenant of France."[185]

The Iberian country conducted unsuccessful military campaigns on the Barbary coast in 1790–92. In 1859, after another war against Morocco, it conquered Sīdī Ifnī in the south, the coastline of which lies only some 200 miles away from the closest of the Canary Islands. Spain would also join the scramble for Africa in the late nineteenth century and prolong its Moroccan efforts of conquest until the mid-1920s. It began by expanding its already existing enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in 1911–13 through the conquest of Larache and Tétouan, thus creating a protectorate between the Mediterranean and Atlantic coasts of Morocco. When Spanish troops tried to extend their radius of action into still uncontrolled tribal lands, initial skirmishes swelled into a veritable war that culminated in 1921 with the grand battle of Anwāl, where the Spanish were disastrously defeated by 'Abd al-Karīm's troops. A confederal Republic of the Rif (*Jumhūrīyat al-Rīf*) was proclaimed, and Spain and France united their forces to crush the insurgency with overwhelming military capacity. Between 125,000 and 160,000 troops were deployed to Morocco to fight a Rif Army of some ten thousand fighters. Tanks, airplanes, and mustard gas bombardments were used, "causing an incalculable number of deaths, indescribable human suffering and escalated cancer rates."[186] After years of devastating struggle, the Rif Republic eventually surrendered in 1926.

The routing of indigenous uprisings at any cost was seen as necessary for the preservation of a European nation's self-esteem. To get an idea of the relevance of the colonial endeavor for the internal politics and national pride of both France and Spain it may suffice to recall how, among the military leaders engaged in the Rif War, we find Philippe Pétain, Miguel Primo de Rivera, and Francisco Franco. Inside Spain the colonial war was tightly intertwined with domestic political issues. The Protectorate became a *feudo de los militares*, who were also the most interested in continuing warfare in Morocco; "from the Moroccan campaigns *heroes* continued to emerge in the eyes of Spanish public opinion," some of whom would then play an important role in the nationalistically loaded atmosphere of Primo de Rivera's dictatorial government in 1923–30.[187] The Spanish Moroccan Protectorate was a springboard for general Franco's *Alzamiento Nacional* in the civil war of 1936–39.

185 Mohr, "Politische Probleme im westlichen Mittelmeer," 11.

186 Jacobson, "Imperial Ambitions," 87–88.

187 Alfonso Iglesias Amorín, "La memoria de las guerras de Marruecos en España (1859-1936)" (PhD diss., Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, 2014), 259.

The European philosophy of history and the colonialism it legitimized were both far from being a merely nationalistic right-wing affair. Ideological buzzwords such as "civilization" and "progress" appealed to a much broader political spectrum. In the early 1930s, the Spanish Second Republic upheld the Protectorate with the consensus of the leading socialists, although sectors of the same party took an anti-colonialist stance. "The main arguments of the left were respect for international treaties (which was of interest above all to maintain good relations with France), the desire to help the progress of the colonised and the interest in spreading western culture among them." The Moroccan resistance against colonization, however, struck chords with the Catalan, Basque, and Galician independence movements inside Spain, and also became an object of solidarity and identification for the revolutionary Spanish left.[188]

With regards to the "Mediterranean World," however, it is important to stress that the rhetoric reference was to "Africa" on both sides of the political aisle, rather than the "Mediterranean." The attribution of Mediterraneanism to Spanish Africanism appears to be, at least in part, a posthumous conclusion tainted by Mediterraneanist visions of the "objective" Mediterranean-ness of Morocco's north-east. Still, words matter, and the words generally used seem to suggest that, even the religious and historical bonds with Rome and Italy notwithstanding, there was no particularly strong Spanish feeling with regard to a "Mediterranean World" until the mid-twentieth century. Spain's historical bonds with Africa date back to ancient times, even before the Islamization of the Iberian peninsula in the Middle Ages reshaped its deep entanglement with Africa. So did the *Reconquista*, which also left behind multilayered entanglements. This not only refers to the new African-Atlantic trade relations of the Spanish Monarchy and its repeated attempts at colonial conquest in Africa but also to the fact that the protracted expulsion of Muslims and Jews created another type of interaction, that between Spain and "its" refugees, however clandestine and fraught with conflict. Expelled Muslim and Jewish Spaniards and *renegados* were not just settlers in North African port cities; for instance, the Moroccan troops that in 1590–91 ransacked Gao and conquered Timbuktu were partly composed of Spaniard refugees and led by a Castile-born general. Moroccan officials who administered the territories conquered in the Niger Basin "were often Spanish renegades or Andalusian refugees."[189] It seems not

188 Iglesias Amorín, "La memoria de las guerras de Marruecos," 400; Alfonso Iglesias Amorín, "Sub-state nationalisms in Spain during the Moroccan War and the Rif War (1909-1927)," *Studies on National Movements* 8, no. 25 (2021), accessed July 19, 2022, https://openjournals.ugent.be/snm/article/id/85317/.

189 Lafi, "Africa and the Nature of the Ottoman Empire," 287.

unlikely that this Islamic and Jewish, yet still "Spanish," experience also had some subterranean influence on shaping early modern Spanish geographic imagination. This, the Atlantic outlook, and centuries of conflict with the Ottoman Empire, Britain, and France, made it understandable that the *africanistas* of the early twentieth century had little use for a "Mediterranean World."

Later in that century, the Franco regime engaged in friendly bilateral relations with several Mediterranean nations but continued to have tense relations with Morocco and Algiers due to its enduring colonial purposes. After 1945, and so long as the regime would last, it proved incapable of developing a comprehensive Spanish "Mediterranean policy."[190] In Morocco, the Northern Zone was given back in 1956, when Morocco regained independence from France and the Spanish subtenant left with the tenant. But two years later in the south, Spain and Morocco fought another war over Sīdī Ifnī, which was definitely restored to Moroccan sovereignty only in 1969.

The lack of a comprehensive "Mediterranean policy" was perhaps also caused by the predominance of Atlanticist, American and African references in the national geographic imaginary. A historiographical dispute regarding Moorish and Jewish influence on Spain's national character and heritage was started by two anti-Francoist exiles at that time.[191] Against the backdrop of the then-ubiquitously crushing influence of Braudel's theses, this finally also became a debate about the Mediterranean-ness of Spain, a debate which, however, remained relatively undecided. Only later in the century, after representative parliamentarism was restored inside the Spanish Monarchy and Spain entered the EC/EU, did Barcelona become an important institutional and political hub for EU-driven Euro-Mediterranean integration initiatives.

The self-description of Risorgimento Italy as the legitimate heir of the Roman Empire provided the Italian national movement from the start with a sense of mission for future geopolitical command in the Mediterranean, the borders of which were conveniently identified with Rome's ancient possessions. Such aspirations were encouraged not only by German commentators seeking to counterbalance French power but also by the American naval strategist Alfred Thayer Mahan. In an argument that also carried anti-British undertones, Mahan maintained that Italy's Mediterranean naval power, despite its favorable geographic position, would remain insignificant unless it annexed

190 Rosa María Pardo Sanz, "The Mediterranean Policy of Franco's Spain," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 16, no. 2 (2001): 45–68.

191 Américo Castro, *La realidad histórica de España* (Porrúa, 1954) underlined the lasting influence of *moros y judíos* for the forging of post-medieval Spain, whereas Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz, *España: Un enigma histórico* (Editorial Sudamericana, 1956) endeavored to refute his thesis, insisting on a perennial *homo hispanus* of Celtiberian origin.

Corsica and Malta.[192] Like their ancestors, Italians had a duty to spread *civilitas* to the barbarians who were living over there. The most obvious proof of legitimate Italian hegemony was thus entrusted to Roman archaeology. Excavations of temples, town halls, baths, and arenas showed the Italians unequivocally that "we" had been "over there" long since, all around *mare nostrum*. Colonial conquest in the Mediterranean area, as a consequence, meant "homecoming." Not by chance, Fascist Italy organized a huge Congress of Roman Archaeology in Tripoli in May 1925.[193]

Sometimes the nationalized memory of other Italian maritime powers was a matter of ideological dispute in domestic and regional affairs, yet complementary rather than in conflict with the myth of Rome when it came to nationalist projections abroad. They also expressed "minor irredentist and/or Risorgimento logics of *mare nostrum*, starting from the myth of Venice," especially in the Adriatic and Ionian areas. Like the glory of ancient Rome, nostalgic memory of the Serenissima and other medieval and early-modern maritime republics supported Italian claims "of more or less vague historical rights over territories or maritime dominions, of linguistic, ethnographic or economic primates."[194] The colonial rule established in the south-eastern Aegean Sea over the Dodecanese Islands between 1912 and 1943 relied on a number of variants, some of which came close to the assumption of a Greek-Latin Mediterranean commonality rooted in Hellenic and Roman antiquity.[195] That said, the Italian colonial discourse was broad, and by no means limited to the myth of *mare nostrum*, not even among settlers and emigrants in the Mediterranean. Peasants, workers, and petit-bourgeois town dwellers from Southern Italy who settled in North Africa remained largely indifferent to discourses regarding the "Mediterranean World." Even bourgeois emigrants—several of whom were political activists and fugitives from reactionary pre-unitarian regimes or, later, monarchy and fascism—were more focused on the political struggles in their home country. Italian colonialism relied on a

192 Mohr, "Politische Probleme im westlichen Mittelmeer," 38.

193 Sergio Romano, *Giuseppe Volpi. Industria e finanza tra Giolitti e Mussolini* (Bompiani, 1979), 118.

194 Filippo Maria Paladini, "Mare nostrum," in *Gli italiani in guerra. Conflitti, identità, memorie dal Risorgimento ai giorni nostri*, vol. 7, ed. Mario Isnenghi and Giulia Albanese (UTET, 2008), 620.

195 Valerie McGuire, *Italy's Sea: Empire and Nation in the Mediterranean, 1895–1945* (Liverpool University Press, 2020), 20–21, 141–48.

broad spectrum of geographical, anthropological, and geopolitical assumptions.[196] *Mare nostrum* was but one, if perhaps the most obvious, narrative element in the context of Mediterranean transborder expansion.

After acquiring parts of the Horn of Africa in the 1880s, Italy's aspirations in North Africa met with several obstacles thanks to adverse French manoeuvres, before its Libyan ambitions were greenlighted by France against the renunciation of Italian efforts in Morocco in two secret treaties of 1899 and 1902, and before it eventually attacked the Ottoman Empire in 1911–12, conquering a coastal strip of Libya, and later the Dodecanese Islands.[197] According to Ian Rutledge, this first European war in the twentieth century is widely "forgotten" even among historians, who tend to overlook its critical role in the chain of events that led to the Great War. Its dynamic interplay with the French and Spanish colonial onslaught in Morocco is commonly accepted, but it was the successful resistance of an alliance between Sanūsīyah-led Arab forces under 'Umar al-Mukhtār and Young Turk/CUP volunteers of the Ottoman army led by General İsmâil Enver on the Jabal al-Akhḍar plateau in the Cyrenaica that induced Liberal Italy to transform the conflict into a naval war and expand it into the Levant and the Aegean, while simultaneously supporting anti-Turkish aspirations in Montenegro, Albania, and Macedonia: "Italy's imperialist war merged seamlessly into a much greater Balkan one," which, in turn, would become a major stepstone to the First World War.[198]

In Libya, expedition commander General Carlo Caneva's proclamation stuck tightly to the western colonialist catechism of the post-Napoleonic era: The Italian troops had not landed for selfish reasons but only to end Ottoman rule and "restore the freedom and rights of the Libyans."[199] After the surrender of the Ottoman troops in Tripolitania, a massacre at Shāri' al-Shaṭṭ, and campaigns that made the resistance retreat to the hills and deserts of the hinterland, Prime Minister Giovanni Giolitti, when proposing to parliament that they officially annex Cyrenaica and Tripoli in 1912, reiterated the justification that "colonial war means the civilisation of populations that otherwise would continue in barbarism."[200]

196 David Atkinson, "Constructing Italian Africa: Geography and Geopolitics," *Italian Colonialism*, ed. Ruth Ben-Ghiat and Mia Fuller (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 15–26.

197 Labanca, *Oltremare*, 57–128; Mohr, "Politische Probleme im westlichen Mittelmeer," 12.

198 Rutledge, *Sea of Troubles*, 457; see also 430–56.

199 Quoted by Habib Wadaa Al-Hesnawi, "Note sulla politica coloniale italiana verso gli arabi libici (1911–1943)," in *Le guerre coloniali del fascismo*, ed. Angelo Del Boca (Laterza, 2008), 34.

200 Quoted by Guido Quazza, "Continuità e rottura nella politica coloniale da Mancini a Mussolini," in *Le guerre coloniali del fascismo*, ed. Angelo Del Boca (Laterza, 2008), 30.



FIGURE 5.3 British air bombardment of a Senussi village and convoy, 1916. Drawing by Frédéric de Haenen. *The Illustrated London News*, March 18, 1916. Public Domain, Wikimedia Commons.

During the First World War, Italy's colonial campaign against the Libyan resistance led by the Senussi religious order (*Sanūsīyah*) overlapped with the broader conflict between the great powers. Despite Italy's intervention on the side of the Entente and British efforts to disrupt the resistance's supply lines from Egypt (Figure 5.3), the conflict ended in a de facto stalemate, with the Senussi remaining a formidable force. Fighting resumed in 1923 after Mussolini's rise to power in Rome. Under Generals Pietro Badoglio and Rodolfo Graziani, the suppression of resistance groups regained momentum. The complete conquest of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania was achieved by 1934, along with that of Fezzan, all of which eventually merged into "Italian Libya," thanks to

particularly brutal "pacification" campaigns conducted with toxic gases, mass deportation, concentration camps, the execution of soldiers and civilians, and the capture and public hanging of resistance leader al-Mukhtār in 1931.[201]

Interestingly, liberal Italy's colonial aspirations and the debate regarding the development of its "backward" southern regions had intersected and partially overlapped since the late nineteenth century.[202] This intersection was confirmed during the fascist period. As reiterated in Palermo business circles in the late 1930s, "with the conquest of Libya and the rebirth of the empire" the city and the island had become "a bridge for maritime communications with the fourth shore and the African lands."[203] They anticipated that African colonies would absorb part of the southern surplus workforce and contribute to the economic development of the southern regions. On the other side of the argument, however, lay an increasing "Levantinization" of the Italian south itself. As already mentioned, this process of discursive transformation had long roots that can be traced back to at least Gibbon's book on the downfall of the Roman Empire; however, southern Italy's full relegation to "backwardness" occurred as a result of the late nineteenth-century disputes over national unification. After World War Two, Carlo Levi, in his book *Christ Stopped at Eboli*, erected a literary monument to the dualist thinking that had resulted from the process. Not by chance, Braudel admired the text due to "the sense of timelessness that underlay Levi's vision of Mediterranean peasant life."[204]

As we may infer from this appreciation, the Italian south was described by means of colonial stereotypes such as savagery, superstition, magic, circular time, and stagnation that no lesser person than Braudel himself associated with "Mediterranean" peasantry. It was placed somewhere "beyond history and progressive reason," according to the cover text of Levi's original edition.[205] Decades before Levi published his book, Alfredo Niceforo had explained that northern and southern Italians belonged "to two different races." While the "Aryans" lived in the north, southern Italy was inhabited by a "Mediterranean" race incapable of urban and industrial progress.[206] For "modern"-

201 Berry, "Historical Setting," 24–31.

202 Leopoldo Franchetti, *L'Italia e la sua colonia africana* (Lapi, 1891); the author was also a leading *meridionalista* concerned with the economic and social improvement of Southern Italy; see Leopoldo Franchetti and Sidney Sonnino, *La Sicilia nel 1876* (Barbera, 1877).

203 Archivio Storico della Camera di Commercio di Palermo (CCPA), cat. III b 21, Verbali del Comitato di presidenza, January 16, 1939, Comunicazioni della Presidenza.

204 James Amelang, "Braudel and the Cultural History of the Mediterranean," in *Braudel Revisited: The Mediterranean World, 1600–1800*, ed. Gabriel Piterberg et al. (University of Toronto Press, 2010), 239.

205 Carlo Levi, *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli* (Einaudi, 1945).

206 Alfredo Niceforo, *Italiani del nord e italiani del sud* (Bocca, 1901), 9–22.

minded Italians this imaginary border between "us" and "Africa," which they were inclined to locate somewhere "down beneath" on the peninsula, became a motive of national embarrassment. As a result, the frequent overlapping of "Mediterranean-ness" with "backwardness" contributed to partially obscuring even the splendor of Rome's heritage and certainly damaged the attractiveness of contemporary *mare nostrum* revivals. All in all, according to Claudio Fogu, the Mediterranean remained a relatively weak element in the making of Italians, many of whom ignored or imagined the sea as "an enemy, an obstacle, or a place of tragedy."[207] Vincenzo Cuoco, an early protagonist of modern Italian patriotism, had already tried "to escape the sea," projecting Italy toward "a land, Europe, which is perhaps the North of modernity."[208]

After 1945, Italy's margins for an independent regional policy were curtailed in favor of the priorities of NATO and America, and sometimes even France. Under similar conditions, Italian control of Libya also could not survive, although "liberals, leftists and neo-fascists united after 1945 in a campaign to retain Italy's colonies."[209] In 1949, driven by motives of supremacy and Cold War confrontation, the British foreign secretary Ernest Bevin and his Italian colleague Carlo Sforza proposed granting a kind of mandate for a British administration in Cyrenaica, an Italian one in Tripolitania, and a French one in the Fezzan. "Fortunately for the Libyans, the Haitians voted against this plan in the United Nations and tipped the balance towards independence. But with King Idris on the throne, Libya enjoyed a constrained freedom."[210] When the provisional allied administration was replaced by Idrīs's rule in 1951, the UK could retain their military bases. In 1958–59, British forces helped to protect the unpopular monarch from unrest. American interest in the country grew after the discovery, in 1959, of the Zalṭan oil fields and their exploitation by Standard Oil starting in 1961. The unconcealed subjugation of the country to neo-colonial interests was disrupted in 1969, when King Idrīs was overthrown by national officers led by Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhāfī.[211] The

207 Claudio Fogu, *The Fishing Net and the Spider Web: Mediterranean Imaginaries and the Making of Italians* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 25.

208 Roberto Dainotto, "Pensiero verticale: Negazione della mediterraneità e radicamento terrestre in Vincenzo Cuoco," *California Italian Studies* 1 (2010): 21.

209 Ruth Ben-Ghiat and Mia Fuller, editors' introduction to *Italian Colonialism* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 2; while most parties wholeheartedly defended colonialism, the Communist Party had a more ambiguous position; Alessandro Pes, "Discorso pubblico e stereotipo del 'buon colonizzatore'," *Memoria e Ricerca* 31, no. 2 (2023): 266–68.

210 Vijay Prashad, *Arab Spring, Libyan Winter* (AK Press, 2012), 100; see also Francesco Tamburini, "Il voto che cambiò la storia: Haiti e la decolonizzazione italiana," *Africana* 24 (2018): 241–62.

211 Prashad, *Arab Spring, Libyan Winter*, 100–106.

new government "aligned with the anti-colonial and pan-Arab values that had characterised Nasser's Egypt"; it "expelled Italian nationals and Jews, confiscating all their assets, and shut down the Western military bases in the country." It also "completely renegotiated the oil contracts with major Western companies."[212]

Against the backdrop of similar geopolitical changes in its neighborhood, Italy made attempts to conduct a more independent Mediterranean policy. This strategy was pursued by some daring political actors and government sectors between the 1950s and the 1970s with regard to Italy's economic and strategic relations with Arab countries and the Palestinian resistance. However, it was doomed to fail whenever it risked seriously interfering with superior—notably American and French—priorities. Frustration over Italy's subordinate role has given rise to an occasional grumble, formulated mostly in terms of Italian-French rivalry, which is still less of a sacrilege than "anti-Americanism."[213] All in all we may conclude that, apart from its occasional rhetoric uses, the country with one of the longest Mediterranean coastlines, positioned at the centre of the sea and epitome of Mediterranean-ness in tourist brochures, has made only an intermittent and minor-key use of Mediterranean symbolism in the realm of national self-understanding.

In the views of committed Mediterraneanists, Greek, Spanish, or Italian "deficits" of Mediterranean enthusiasm pale in comparison with the utter indifference of nations who looked upon the waters on their domestic doorsteps apparently without even a glimpse of their world-historical significance. In the pages of his famous book on the Mediterranean as *A Cultural Landscape*, Predrag Matvejević tried to finally insert his homeland of southern Slavs into the "Mediterranean World." The Slavs "arrived in the Balkans overland, a small part of their tribes adapted to the sea and settled along its shores. With few exceptions their maritime exploits have remained within the bounds of the Adriatic, and when they sailed the Mediterranean or other seas, they were more likely to do so under foreign flag than under their own." Although they "developed in symbiosis with Mediterranean culture as a 'third component' among such oppositions as east/west, north/south, land/sea, Balkan/European," they did not particularly think of themselves as "Mediterraneans," nor were they perceived as such. "Yet speak I must, because the world knows little

212 Matteo Capasso, "The perils of capitalist modernity for the Global South: the case of Libya," *Review of International Political Economy* 30, no. 2 (2023): 635.

213 Salvatore Bono, "Italy's Mediterranean Policies," in *Mediterranean Policies from Above and Below,* ed. Isabel Schäfer and Jean-Robert Henry (Nomos, 2009), 87.

about the Mediterranean's South Slavs – even their neighbours on the Adriatic – and because we ourselves have done little to remedy the situation."[214]

Matvejević claimed that Albanians shared the same deficit of recognition with their Slav neighbors. They "call the sea *det*: they are apparently the only Mediterraneans to use it."[215] *Det* means "sea" and appears to derive from etymons of depth (like "deep" in English). This, again, was before those waters were placed at the center of a "world" that transformed all coastland dwellers into "Mediterraneans." Angelo Masci's and Johann Georg von Hahn's nineteenth-century notion, according to which the "Pelasgian" language was Proto-Albanian, was readily integrated into Albania's national self-understanding. It conveniently showed that they were the heirs of "one of the most ancient Mediterranean populations."[216] Nevertheless, the Mediterranean component remained relatively weak in the national discourse.

When discussing the supposed lack of Mediterranean-ness among southern Slavs and Albanians, one must also consider their centuries-long experience of imperial domination. As Matvejević notes, this subjugation did not prevent them from engaging in maritime life, but it did deny them the chance to sail under their own flag. Their experience was absorbed into the Venetian, Ottoman, and Habsburg interaction with the "Mediterranean World." Even when formal independence was achieved before the First World War, imperial impositions persisted. Industrial and industrializing powers, in particular, enforced relationships of economic and financial dependency that often extended into political control. After 1830, a Bavarian dynasty was commissioned by the Great Powers to establish the Greek monarchy. In the early years of the government, "Westerners were appointed to almost every major position." Even after the subsequent nationalization of the Greek state and its politics, in 1898, Greece was forced to submit its finances to an International Financial Commission (IFC), which directly controlled state monopoly and customs revenues, transferring them via the National Bank to service the external debt.[217] Another telling example is the rivalry between the Kingdom of Italy and Austria-Hungary: first encouraging Albanian dissociation from the Otto-

214 Predrag Matvejević, *Mediterranean: A Cultural Landscape* (University of California Press, 1999), 85–87.

215 Matvejević, *Mediterranean*, 87.

216 Stefanaq Pollo et al., *Historia e Shqipërisë*, vol. 2 (Universiteti Shtetëror i Tiranës-Instituti i Historisë dhe Gjuhësisë, 1965), 55, quoted from Anesti Naci, "L'immagine dell'Italia e degli italiani nell'Albania comunista" (PhD diss., Università di Udine, 2017), 121.

217 Gallant, *The Edinburgh History of the Greeks*, 114, 301.

man Empire, then competing over who would control the national bank and finances of an ostensibly "independent" Albania.[218] A final example is the Vilâyet of Bosnia, which became an Austrian "protected" territory from 1878 until its annexation in 1908. It is usually exempted from debates on colonialism, and we abstain here from pondering whether or not this is for good reason—also because soon after the proclamation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes in 1918 (renamed the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929) marked the beginning of a different era.

Asian and African Coastal Countries

We have already touched upon the "objective" Mediterranean-ness of the Ottoman Empire and why it had little use for a metaphorical geographical imagination of this maritime space, given the much wider range of its geographical reference and self-perception. Western historiography has nonetheless become used to inserting Ottoman and Turkish history into the context of Mediterranean history. However, it is one thing to include factual maritime connections, transfers, parallelisms, or similarities of development or even aspects of "a common intellectual climate across the Mediterranean" in which the empire participated.[219] It is another thing to discover, or indeed fail to discover, a political use of the Mediterranean mythologeme in late-Ottoman imperial or Turkish national discourse.

Tanzimât also included a "restructuring" of historical narratives along the lines of (post-)Enlightenment teleological notions of "world history" and "modernization." In actual fact, those lines were deflected by various conflicting exigencies, such as the debated statute of Byzantium as an accepted or disavowed aspect of Ottoman past, with the additional complication of Byzantium's own contended images as a "western" or "eastern" empire, and as a protector or destroyer of Greek-Hellenic heritage. The latter aspect was relevant for the positioning of the Turkish nation with regards to its most relevant Other: the Greeks. This, however, was a late development. In the nineteenth century, following Greek independence, there were decades of peaceful coex-

218 Blumi, *Reinstating the Ottomans*, 167–68; and Peter Hertner, "Großmachtrivalität und –kooperation im Adriaraum. Italien, Österreich-Ungarn und das Projekt einer albanischen Staatsbank," *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 85 (2005): 272–317.

219 Marinos Sariyannis, *A History of Ottoman Political Thought up to the Early Nineteenth Century* (Brill, 2019), 301; also, Christopher Markiewicz, "Europeanist Trends and Islamicate Trajectories in Early Modern Ottoman History," *Past & Present* 239, no. 1 (2018): 265–81.

istence, centered on the tight relationship between the Greeks of the new kingdom and the Greeks who, for the most part, lived loyally within the Ottoman Empire. Even at the height of the Greco-Turkish War of 1897, only a small minority of the Sultan's Greek subjects openly embraced Greek irredentism. It was only after the Balkan Wars of 1912–13, which triggered the ethnic cleansing and expulsion of large Muslim populations, that Turkish nationalism radicalized and began to perceive the empire's non-Muslim subjects, especially Greeks and Armenians, as an internal Other.[220] However, as we have already seen in the Greek case, even an affirmative nationalization of the Hellenic-Byzantine heritage—as was occasionally brought into play to emphasize Türkiye's proximity to Europe[221]—would not have contributed necessarily more than the Ottoman heritage to "Mediterraneanize" the country.

Initially, the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 opened up a kind of "neo-Ottoman" perspective, insofar as it was supported by multiple regional leaders and national groups who saluted the replacement of the absolute monarchy with a constitutional one without immediately challenging the territorial integrity of the state. The idea of a multi-national polity succumbed, however, to the strength of disintegrative nationalist tendencies supported by competing great-power interference that manifested during and after the Balkan wars.[222] Even if the multi-national hypothesis had not been shattered on the path to and through the First World War, there is little to suggest that the Mediterranean metaphor could have had a higher significance for that greater inclusive Republic than it had for the abdicating Empire.

In the further process of transformation from empire into republican nationhood, the Ottoman legacy itself, together with its Arab-Persian connections, also came under increasingly critical scrutiny. Although the territorial retreat to Eastern Thrace and Anatolia did not imply ethnic homogeneity, Pan-Turkism—or Turanism—now emerged as a more reliable foundational element of Turkish nation-building that needed the Mediterranean even less than neo-Ottomanism or pan-Islamism. As a geographical reference for its own origin and kinship, it looked toward Central Asia striving for the unification of all Oghuz Turks (*Oğuz Türkleri*). It explicitly distanced itself from Ottoman amalgamations of Turkish culture with Greek-Byzantine, Persian, Arab, and "more recently, Western civilisations."[223] It thus decentered the national geographical imaginary even farther away from the Mediterranean Sea. Some

220 Gallant, *The Edinburgh History of the Greeks*, 286–99, 324.

221 Mishkova, *Rival Byzantiums*, 294.

222 Aykut Kansu, *Politics in Post-Revolutionary Turkey, 1908–1913* (Brill, 2000), 215–441.

223 Ziya Gökalp, *The Principles of Turkism* [Türkçülüğün esaslari, 1923] (Brill, 1968), 31.

of its variants—with which "the claims to autochthony moved to Anatolia" to create a Turkish-centred "narrative on the origins of 'world history'"[224]—deprived Europe of its universalistic privilege. The struggle in 1920–23 to fend off the partition of Anatolia along the lines of the Sykes-Picot agreement, in accordance with the allied promises made to the Greeks and Armenians during the war, added to the sense of estrangement from western propositions within the national Turkish establishment.[225] In short, it seems hard to find any with a suitable use for a "Mediterranean World" among the variants of Turkish national thought.[226]

A relatively belated case for Mediterranean-ness was made in Israel. The original project had been a stranger to such an idea. At the state's foundation in 1948, the imported nationalist ideology, alongside the overwhelming majority of the settler colonists, was of Central European origin. Despite a few exceptions, early Zionism, starting with Herzl himself, "never envisioned the future Jewish state as being influenced by local Mediterranean or oriental elements, but rather as a copy of nineteenth-century Vienna, a European oasis."[227] Since Herzl literally wanted it to become part of a wall of defence for Europe in Asia, the image of backwardness attached to Levantine or Sephardic Jews, which had taken shape in the European imaginary as an Orientalist elaboration of cross-Mediterranean encounters, was hardly seen as a worthy element of national self-representation.[228] A "Mediterranean option" for Jewish settlers in Palestine was brought into play by a minority of Sephardic intellectuals who took the Mediterranean as the symbol of "a dialogue and cross-fertilisation between East and West," which they favored. Perhaps the hope was to accommodate the national discourse with greater ease in the

224 Mishkova, *Rival Byzantiums*, 182–83.

225 Rutledge, *Sea of Troubles*, 475–77.

226 See Feride Çiçekoğlu and Edhem Eldem, *La Méditerranée turque* (Maisonneuve & Larose, 2000); Kemal H. Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State* (Oxford University Press, 2001), 276–327; Çiğdem Oğuz, "'We Will Adopt the Technology of Europe but not the European Morality': The Quest for Authentic Values in Late Ottoman Politics," in *Reconsidering Europeanization*, ed. Florian Greiner et al. (De Gruyter, 2022), 125–50.

227 Alexandra Nocke, *The Place of the Mediterranean in Modern Israeli Identity* (Brill, 2009), 18.

228 Julie Kalman, *Orientalizing the Jew. Religion, Culture and Imperialism in Nineteenth-Century France* (Indiana University Press, 2017), 1–11.

surrounding environment, and help integrate the growing number of initially marginalised settler-immigrants of "Oriental" (*mizrahi*) background.[229]

Only in later decades, when Isreal sought major support from European countries, did the promotion of the "Mediterranean option" gain strength. This idea was based on the assumption that "Israel, both as a society and as a culture, belongs to the 'Mediterranean world' and has always formed an integral part" of it. Scholars such as Nahum Slouschz, who had long since stressed the existence of a Phoenician-Hebrew "Mediterranean civilisation" under which "the unity of the Mediterranean basin was first achieved," received new attention.[230] Slouschz's thesis went beyond the traditional assumption that the Israelites had been in close contact with the neighboring Phoenicians and their "colonial empire that stretched over the whole Mediterranean World" but represented, nevertheless, a different type of land-centred society.[231] At any rate, Mediterraneanist enthusiasm continued to encounter in Israel the skepticism of those who saw in it a "Western-oriented model" and "continuation of the Zionist narrative of denial, erasure, and exclusion of Mizrahi historical identity."[232]

In Arab speaking countries, together with the symbols of Arab and Islamic history, remnants of Assyrian, Pharaonic, and other antiquity also became objects of national pride. Roman temples or Crusader castles, although part of the national patrimonies and valued tourist attractions, were nonetheless emblems of a threat of invasion associated with the Mediterranean Sea. The "ancestors" who could be positively connected to the sea were instead, once again, the Phoenicians. Numerous Arab thinkers of the nineteenth and early twentieth century tried to insert them into the national imaginary. They were often encouraged to do so by western interlocutors who were eager to unite the history of the "other shore" with European history, in an integral narrative of the "Mediterranean World." The reference to the Phoenicians allowed all Arab elites who made use of it to carve out a national dimension different to that of both the one single Arab nation, and the one single Muslim *ummah*. In many, though not all, cases, Phoenicianism was associated with a relatively

229 David Ohana, "The Mediterranean Option in Israel: An Introduction to the Thought of Jacqueline Kahanoff," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 21, no. 2 (2006): 239; see also Dario Miccoli, "'Europe from Afar': A Poetic History of the Jewish Mediterranean," in *Mediterranean Europe(s): Rethinking Europe from its Southern Shores*, ed. Matthew D'Auria and Fernanda Gallo (Routledge, 2023), 94–110, and Claudia De Martino, *I "mizrahim" in Israele. La storia degli ebrei dei Paesi islamici (1948–77)* (Carocci, 2015).

230 Shavit, "The Mediterranean World," 96, 106, 108.

231 Salo Wittmayer Baron, *Histoire d'Israël* [1952], vol. 1 (PUF, 1986), 51.

232 Nocke, *The Place of the Mediterranean*, 168–69.

friendly disposition toward Europe and the West, the influence of which was strong as long as Ottoman and European-colonialist domination lasted but weakened over the second half of the twentieth century.

The areas that could make claims of Phoenician heritage with major factual plausibility were those of the former Ottoman Eyalet of Şam, now repopularized under the name of Syria, and in particular Lebanon, as well as Tunisia, the land of Carthage. In the latter case, however, the reach of the Carthaginian myth remained for its most part confined to westernized upper classes with a "double European-Arab identity," whereas the "more poor factions of the society" hardly felt like Hannibal's children.[233] Local economic and academic elites who cooperated with foreign-financed networks may well have concluded that "the South and the North Mediterranean, more than ever before, are confluent in terms of identity, culture and economy."[234] The effective reach of similar discourses in wider society remains to be seen, however.

The nationalist forces that guided the anti-colonial Tunisian struggle in the mid-twentieth century, although recognizing "the various contributions of the Phoenicians, the Romans, the Vandals, the Byzantines," preferred looking to the "Berber foundations" of Tunisia upon which the "grandiose Arab-Muslim civilisation" was crafted. Leveraging narratives of Almoravid and Almohad history, and medieval references to "the fertile hills of the West" (Ibn Khaldūn), Maghrebinism, together with North-Africanism, emerged as an oppositional ideological force during the late French *Empire de la Méditerranée*, and especially in the 1930s. They conveyed anti-colonial sentiment and a pan-Arab solidarity that nonetheless had a regionalist anchorage. After independence, this mindset would also remain a hallmark of distinction in the inter-Arab context, whereas Pan Africanism would become a matter of ideological contention and geopolitical competition with Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhāfī's Libya. At any rate, Maghrebinism and Africanism were politically more rewarding discourses for Tunisia during the decolonization period than Mediterraneanism would have been. "Although a physical reality, the Mediterranean was rarely adopted as a reasoning framework or reference for diplomatic initiatives." Only occasionally, and in a manifestly instrumental manner, would President Ḥabīb Būrqībah evoke Tunisian Mediterranean-ness as a symbol for peaceful neutrality in his interactions with European neighbor countries, as well as the

233 Michael J. Totten, "The Children of Hannibal," *City Journal*, Autumn 2012, accessed August 10, 2022, https://www.city-journal.org/html/children-hannibal-13509.html.

234 Mohieddine Hadri, "A confluence area to prosper," *The Bridge. A Quarterly Review on European Integration* 6, no. 3 (2007): 65.

USA, the USSR, and Türkiye. This was due to the difficulties of navigating his country through the cliffs and shallows of the Cold War and keeping it on a pro-Western but non-aligned course.[235]

Algeria's international coordinates in the aftermath of the war of independence differed from those of its eastern neighbor, in being closer and symbolically more relevant to the Third World's anticolonial struggle, and also more open to cooperation with the Soviet Union. Nonetheless, the fundamental difficulties of steering the country through the Cold-War labyrinth of pressures and enticements were similar. President Hawwārī Būmadyan also affirmed that the Mediterranean should be a "Lake of Peace," and home to "the Mediterraneans" instead of being a playground of external superpowers.[236] As in the Tunisian case, he expressed in these words a position of geopolitical pragmatism that was quite distant from the heartfelt Mediterraneanist projection of Europe, which the Algerian nation had shed so much blood to shake off.

In the Levant, Phoenicianism was instead of great importance for nation-building, without expressing a pro-European leaning in all circumstances. Among the first people to connect the Phoenician past with the Arab present were American Protestant missionaries who settled in Beirut as early as the 1820s. They did so with a mix of religious, civilizational, and scientific purposes. They educated generations of locals of mainly Christian confession, helped with the establishment of scholarly and cultural institutions, and with the printing of books and newspapers in Arabic. They also helped restore the appellative of *Sūriyā* to common language. The Syrian Protestant College founded in 1866, which later became the American University of Beirut, would greatly influence "cultural awakening in the Arab world."[237]

The American missionary-scholars were joined by local Christian literati such as Buṭrus al-Bustānī, in a common effort to revive the study and dissemination of the Arabic language, as well as the ancient history of *bilād al-Shām*. The whole richesse of linguistic and cultural traditions of greater Syria was emphasized. Its pre-Christian and pre-Islamic Arabic traditions were celebrated, for example in a novel that Bustānī dedicated to the Queen of Palmyra, Zenobia. Phoenician history helped position Syria at the beginning of the process of exploration, colonization, trade expansion, and transfer that European

235 Mohamed Ben Ahmed, *Les trois décennies de politique étrangère du Président Bourguiba* (Centre de Publication Universitaire, 2019), ii, 329–37, 394–406 and 568–79.

236 Mohammed Lakhdar Ghettas, *Algeria and the Cold War: International Relations and the Struggle for Autonomy* (I.B. Tauris, 2018), 33.

237 AbuKhalil, *Historical Dictionary of Lebanon*, 25.

philosophy of history was calling "civilisation."[238] The Arab language was a later but equally important part of that chain, as it had safeguarded the Greek and Roman cultural heritage from destruction and oblivion. The discourse among Beirut circles on Syria, seen "not as Muslim or Christian, but as Arab," became an important reference for secular Arab nationalism.[239]

At that time Phoenician history had not yet been leveraged as a means of anti-Arab distinction, not even when Maronite scholar Ṭannūs al-Shidyāq published a book in 1855 that only later would be used to emphasize the difference between Lebanon and Syria. A description of the main Phoenician towns was inserted into his book on the dynastic history and geography of Mount Lebanon during the Mamluk and Ottoman periods, in order to erect a bridge to the ancient history of the region.[240] Against the background of the 1860 fratricide war, which Bustānī deemed the result of futile rivalries and sectarianism, he anonymously published the *Clarion of Syria*, the first thorough patriotic appeal that insisted Syria was "our homeland with all its diverse plains, coastlines, mountains, and barren lands." All its inhabitants were compatriots, regardless of their religious beliefs or other diversities.[241]

The result of re-establishing and reinforcing Arab language and literature as the cultural backbone of Syria should be appreciated against the backdrop of partially successful French efforts to implant Francophonie among the educated elites of the Mediterranean countries under French rule or influence. Outside its official colonies, such effort was made in Egypt, where it had some success in, for example, "cosmopolitan" Alexandria, and in the Levant. It is an interesting side note that during the Lebanese war of 1860, Napoleon III sent in historian "Ernest Renan along with his troops of intervention, with an assignment to investigate the country's Phoenician past."[242] This was perhaps an attempt to recruit the Phoenician past for the patrimony of the coming French Mediterranean empire. When Syria and Lebanon came under direct French control in the wake of the First World War, Francophonie made great inroads among the Lebanese and Syrian upper class, especially the Maronite

238 Andrew Arsan, "'Citizens of the World … who stopped at every shore': Eastern Mediterranean Migration, Social Thought, and the Diasporic Uses of the Phoenician Past, c. 1880–1940," *Mashriq and Mahjar* 2 (2013): 89–91.

239 Fruma Zachs, *The Making of a Syrian Identity. Intellectuals and Merchants in Nineteenth Century Beirut* (Brill, 2005), 128–45, 190–93.

240 طنوس الشدياق [Ṭannūs al-Shidyāq], أخبار الأعيان في جبل لبنان [Information on the Notables in Mount Lebanon, 1857–59], vol. 1 (Maktabat al-'Irfān, 1904), 7–13; I thank Nawal Petri Diab for language assistance; see also Asher Kaufman, *Reviving Phoenecia. The Search for Identity in Lebanon* (I.B. Tauris, 2014), 39.

241 al-Bustani, *The Clarion of Syria*, 76.

242 Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 37.

elites, but was also taught in hundreds of French schools across both countries.

The conceptual erosion of the idea of Syrian unity had manifested itself under French influence since the beginning of the twentieth century. Initially, writers such as Jacques Tabet insisted on Syrian national unity, with "Phoenicianism as the imagined collective identity" but no longer any strong Arab reference.[243] Phoenicianism then became a contended reference itself. On the one hand it was upheld by anti-colonialist Syrian nationalism thanks to intellectuals like Anṭūn Saʿādah. The Greek Orthodox scholar and politician insisted that the Syrians were a single people of varying ancient descent that had established itself throughout "natural Syria," which was not only superimposed with *bilād al-shām* but the whole non-Egyptian part of the Fertile Crescent, stretching through Aleppo and Raqqa toward Southern Anatolia, Upper Mesopotamia, and beyond, and to Cyprus on its western edge.[244]

On the other hand, Phoenicianism, together with Francophonie and the use of the Mediterranean metaphor, began to be weaponized against Arab and Syrian nationalism and anti-colonialism. As a reaction to the growing influence of Pan-Arabism in Syria and in sectors of Lebanese society, French language and Phoenician history both became the hallmarks of a Lebanese distinction from its Arab surroundings for many of the Maronite elites, and even from Syria itself. Now the Phoenician past morphed into the principal "proof" of the perennial existence of a distinct Lebanese nation, the truest contemporary form of which would consist of a Maronite-led Lebanese nation state.[245] According to Jesuit pater Sélim Abou (Salīm Abū), French-Arab bilingualism therefore expressed the "Lebanese national spirit" at its best. It reflected the country's vocation as a "Mediterranean crossroads for the passage of cultures," whereby the Lebanese national mission consisted of mediating "the transplantation of the Occident to the Orient, which the Arabs yearn for."[246] Since, in fact, not all Arabs did yearn for it, even in Lebanon, ideas regarding the nation's relationship with the Arab and Euro-Mediterranean countries polarized. Maronite Phoenicianism "viewed the sea as friendly territory, even as a

243 Asher Kaufman, "'Pheonicianism': The Formation of an Identity in Lebanon of 1920," *Middle Eastern Studies* 37, no. 1 (2001): 182; the reference is to Jacques Tabet, *La Syrie* (Lemerre, 1920).

244 Thomas Scheffler, "'Fertile Crescent', 'Orient', 'Middle East': The Changing Mental Maps of Southwest Asia," *European Review of History* 10, no. 2 (2003): 256.

245 Kamal Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered* [*1988*] (I.B. Tauris, 2008), 170–76.

246 Quoted from Caroline Hervé-Montel, *Renaissance littéraire et conscience nationale* (Geuthner, 2012), 200, 203.

bridge to Israel and the West, whereas Arab Nationalism saw the Mediterranean Sea as an unfriendly space, whose distant shores were populated by enemies."[247] Societal consent for Lebanon's candidature as the West's best outpost has eroded since the 1970s, thanks to structural and demographic changes, the tragic civil war, and resistance against foreign occupation, along with the broader context of western interventions and the subsequent geopolitical transformations that had great impact on the Cedar country.

As in the other areas of the former vilayets of Syria and Aleppo, the period of the late Ottoman Empire and the aftermath of the First World War were critical for the development of a national consciousness in Palestine as well. Any idea of nation in the whole area had to rely on a mixture of religious, linguistic, pan-Arab, local, and familial ties, and in part had to compete with them. In the Palestinian case, unlike its neighbors, the formation of a specific national thought in the further course of events could not rely on the establishment of a nation-state and thus mitigate this plurality. In turn, the experience of resistance became constitutive for a strong identification with Palestine, which also gave it a social dimension: "It was peasants driven off their farmland by Zionist land purchases, mainly from absentee landlords, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, who first understood the nature of the process of colonization affecting Palestine." Within Palestinian national discourse, historical and spatial references are anchored by Jerusalem and the Holy Land, a territory that embodies foundational historical ties to Abrahamic religion and tradition. Conversely, the adjoining sea has figured as a source of external threat, a perception deeply ingrained in historical memory. It can be projected far into the past, notably to the time of the Crusades, where the dispossession of sacred spaces was a central theme, mirroring present-day menaces.[248]

In Egypt, under the ruling dynasty founded by Mehmet Ali Paşa that lasted throughout the colonial period and the first decades of formal independence, the national imaginary rested on its multiple connections not only with North Africa and the Mediterranean but also with the Levant, the Arabian Peninsula, and the Indian Ocean. In the nineteenth century, however, Egypt's traditional entanglement with Central-East African developments, especially along the Nile axis, gained great political momentum and affected the imagination of national spaces, which were increasingly perceived as different from those of the Levant, the Arabian Peninsula, and the Maghreb. Being enmeshed with

247 Nocke, *The Place of the Mediterranean*, 208.

248 Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (Columbia University Press, 1997), 6–20, 194–209; the direct quote is on page 7.

Sudanese and Ethiopian affairs was even reinforced after Egypt's integration in the British colonial empire. Within the same framework, Napoleon's expedition of 1798–1801 was spoken of relatively positively by governing élites and liberal nationalists, insofar as it was welcomed as a trigger of "modernisation" and archaeological discovery. The reference to the Pharaonic past during the first half of the twentieth century, enhanced by nationalist intellectuals, distanced the idea of Egypt further, at least in relative terms, from pan-Arab and pan-Islamic stances. The "Egyptian mind," wrote Ṭāhā Ḥusayn in 1938, was also "influenced from earliest times by the Mediterranean Sea and the peoples living around it."[249] Although centered primarily on the Nile Valley, this interpretation maintained that Egypt's tradition was "western" rather than "eastern," owing to its "historic links with Europe" across the Mediterranean.[250]

This may help explain why Anglo-American intelligence and foreign policymakers still in the late 1940s lulled themselves into the belief that they were in a "comfort zone" when it came to Egyptian nationalism. They evidently put their trust in the European-inspired, wealthy liberal upper class and reduced the "politically inarticulate" Egyptian masses to a negligible entity.[251] During the decolonization process after World War Two, however, more radical stances became popular. The Pharaonic past continued to be cherished, but its mental association with the West was also weakened by the growing awareness of the blatant looting of antiquities that Europeans had perpetrated in some form or another throughout the centuries. Praise for the "modernising" effects of colonialism and secularization also came under critical scrutiny.[252]

Pan Arab nationalism began to penetrate Egyptian politics during the government of Jamāl ʻAbd al-Nāṣir, who put aside his initial skepticism to strengthen his country's international bonds. A Nasserist blend of Pan Arabism became the official ideology in Egypt, and grew popular beyond Egyptian borders, with the foundation of the United Arab Republic of Egypt and Syria in 1958. Since that time, with Nāṣir's choice "to firmly locate Egypt in

249 Quoted from Clancy-Smith and Smith, *The Modern Middle East*, 167.

250 Michael Wood, "The Use of the Pharaonic Past in Modern Egyptian Nationalism," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 35 (1998): 181.

251 John Voll, "US Policy Toward the Unity of the Nile Valley, 1945–1952," in *Narrating the Nile. Politics, Cultures, Identities*, ed. by Israel Gershoni and Meir Hatani (Lynn Rienner, 2008), 105.

252 Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid Marsot, "L'expédition d'Égypte et le débat sur la modernité," *Égypte/Monde arabe* 1 (1999): 4, accessed May 12, 2025, https://journals.openedition.org/ema/pdf/716.

the 'Arab World'," the country's belonging to the Mediterranean was "de-emphasized."[253] After the setback of the 1967 June War with Israel, Pan Arabism, with the partial exception of Ba'athism, weakened and gradually retreated as a political force. Yet the idea of a single Arab nation, although politically marginalized, did not completely vanish in Arab public opinion.[254]

For Arab nationalism, as well as political Islam, there was a single positive aspect of the Napoleonic occupation to remember, namely that it "had favoured the resistance of the Egyptian people to this occupation, and therefore the birth of the national movement."[255] In the 1960s, martyred student Ḥalabī, who, with General Kléber, had killed a symbolic figurehead of the dawning French-dominated "Mediterranean World," morphed into a redeeming "hero on the path of glory" and a legend of Arab resistance in a dedicated work by Alfrid Faraj, one of Egypt's most talented playwrights.[256]

Over the centuries and up to this day, especially in the narrative of the Palestinian national self, the Crusader metaphor is unrelenting in epitomizing the menace of western intrusion from across the Mediterranean Sea but also "the ultimate triumph of resistance to alien invasion and colonisation."[257] The fictionalization of Jean-Baptiste Kléber's and Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī's fateful encounter, however, also suggests the presence of a distinct understanding of the post-revolutionary, liberal and colonialist, secular and universalist—in short: European and Western instead of just Catholic and Frankish—sense of mission as the basis of the ideological project called the "Mediterranean World." This makes the scarce credibility of the Mediterranean metaphor in the Arab and Muslim coastlands, where the 1798 expedition is indeed remembered "as the first imperialist aggression of modern times against the Muslim East," even more understandable.[258]

253 Pinar Bilgin, "Securing the Mediterranean, inventing the 'Middle East'," in *Routledge Handbook of Mediterranean Politics*, ed. Richard Gillespie and Frédéric Volpi (Routledge, 2018), 52.

254 As'ad AbuKhalil, "A New Arab Ideology? The Rejuvenation of Arab Nationalism," *Middle East Journal* 46, no. 1 (1992): 24; see also Bassam Tibi, *Arab Nationalism. Between Islam and the Nation-State* (Palgrave Macmillan, 1997), 201–12; and James Jankowski, *Nasser's Egypt, Arab Nationalism and the United Arab Republic* (Lynne Rienner Publisher, 2002), 88–184.

255 Solé, *Bonaparte*, 483.

256 See ألفريد فرج [Alfrīd Faraj] سليمان الحلبي مسرحية [Suleiman Al-Halabi, A Play, 1965] (Dār Ṭalās lil-Dirāsāt wa-al-Tarjamah wa-al-Nashr, 2006), 7; I thank Nawal Petri Diab for language assistance.

257 Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*, 13.

258 Solé, *Bonaparte*, 484.

CHAPTER 6

Projecting the West onto the Mediterranean, 1877–1973

In 1877, French historian and geographer Paul Vidal de la Blache began his Paris academic tenure as a maître de conferences of École normale supérieure (ENS). Before going to teach in rue d'Ulm, he held a position at the French School of Athens, from where he traveled to other Greek regions, Italy, and the Levant, as well as to Egypt to attend the inauguration of the Suez Canal in 1869. After defending his doctoral thesis in ancient history, he was appointed professor at Nancy University.[1] In the reading notes of his 1877–1878 and 1878–1879 courses at ENS, we overwhelmingly find German authors, in particular geographers such as Alexander von Humboldt, Carl Ritter, August Heinrich Petermann, Hermann Adalbert Daniel, Karl Andree, and Ferdinand von Richthofen, together with historians like Gustav Gilbert, Theodor Mommsen, and Gustav Droysen, ethnographers, and several others.[2] Fresh research by Vidal's German coeval Friedrich Ratzel was present from the start, annotated in French: *Ratzel – Les Etats Unis*.[3] Among the few non-German sources, there were almost exclusively texts by British authors: the eighteenth-century historians of antiquity George Grote and George Rawlinson, and the nineteenth-century "explorers" of Africa, John Hanning Speke, Henry Morton Stanley, and David Livingstone.

Vidal de la Blache knew the Mediterranean well, as both a traveler and a scholar. He discussed aspects of Mediterranean geography and "human

1 Howard F. Andrews, "Les premiers cours de géographie de Paul Vidal de la Blache à Nancy (1873–1877)," *Annales de Géographie* 95, no. 529 (1986): 341–61.

2 École normale supérieure, Registre des professeurs, 1877-1878, page 249, accessed February 19, 2023, https://archive.org/details/ENS01_AB_00012/page/n251/mode/2up; Bibliothèque des lettres de l'École normale supérieure, Registre des professeurs, 1878–1879, f. 200. École normale supérieure, Bibliothèque d'Ulm, AB/13, Expositions Virtuelles Bibliothèques de l'ENS, accessed February 19, 2023, https://archive.org/details/ENS01_AB_00013/page/n205/mode/2up.

3 The first German edition of Ratzel's *Die Vereinigten Staaten von Nord-Amerika*, 2 vols. (Oldenbourg, 1878–80), was published concurrently with the courses; we do not know whether the annotations were added later or if Vidal refers instead to an earlier publication, Friedrich Ratzel's *Städte- und Kulturbilder aus Nordamerika* (Brockhaus, 1876).

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agglomeration,"[4] mostly in comparison with other regions, but to our knowledge he did never dedicate a more comprehensive in-depth investigation specifically to the "Mediterranean World." Nevertheless, his life and work can be considered pivotal in our narrative, for at least three reasons: first, because of his thorough reception and transfer of German geography to the French context; second, because of the influence he exerted on Fernand Braudel through his students Emmanuel de Martonne and Lucien Febvre; and third, because his exchange with, and reception of, Friedrich Ratzel can be considered significant for the transnational pre-history of geopolitics.[5]

Already in Nancy, the focus of Vidal's teaching was "devoted to geography in its relations with history," looking in particular at how the manifold relations between "race, history and interests" interact with environmental conditions. Like Reclus, he confirmed that "civilization" had marched from Africa to the great valleys of Asia and from there to Europe, where it, "so to speak, acclimatized by preference." Why? Not that everything could be explained by soil and physical circumstances, but how could one not see that an important part of the explanation "belongs to the geographical influences"? As for Europe, a reference to its continental conditions could not fully explain such influences since that "continent" in actual fact was not even a continent: "Europe, to define it, is a peninsula, the vastest, if you like, of those on the Asian continent," as "the main originality of Europe consists in the distribution of the seas which bathe it," because it was "accessible to a greater depth than any other, to maritime influences." This was true for the ocean; for example, the "advanced degree of civilization in Europe has been attributed to the influence of the Gulfstream." And it was even more true for the Mediterranean, as there had never been "a revolution comparable in its results to that which, violently separating the two columns of Hercules, threw the Mediterranean into the bottom of the basin bordered by the mountains of Europe and Africa."[6]

4 Paul Vidal de la Blache, "Les grandes agglomérations humaines. Troisième article: Régions Méditerranéennes," *Annales de Gèographie* 147 (1918): 174–87.

5 Vidal had already known German geographers such as Richthofen and Oscar Peschel personally and would later engage in some form of exchange with Ratzel, though the nature and content of their interactions remain unclear due to the apparent lack of surviving correspondence; see Archiv für Geographie, Leibniz-Institut für Länderkunde, Leipzig (AfG), Nachlass Schmidthüsen, box 925 shelfmark 6/187–201, Unterlagen zu Vidal de la Blache; Ian Klinke, *Life, Earth, Colony*, 211, 254; and Vidal's necrology for his German colleague: Paul Vidal de la Blache, "Nécrologie," *Annales de Gèographie* 72 (1904): 466–67.

6 Paul Vidal de La Blache, *La péninsule européenne, l'océan et la Méditerranée: leçon d'ouverture du cours d'histoire et géographie à la Faculté des lettres de Nancy* (Berger-Leverault et C. ie, 1873), 1–2, 5, 13.

In short, although critical of old-stylish idealism, Vidal nevertheless used, like the early-nineteenth-century German authors in his reading list, an unprovable axiom about the meaning of history to characterize the Earth's surface, contrary to what an empirically grounded science would do. This axiom was expressed by "civilization," an Enlightenment buzzword popularized a century earlier by Adam Ferguson. "Not only the individual advances from infancy to manhood, but the species itself from rudeness to civilization," the Scottish philosopher had glossed.[7] While the verb "to civilize" had already characterized for a while the relationship between the colonizers and the colonized, master and slave, Crusoe and Friday ("I civilize Friday"), the new noun stood for the overall purpose of history and allowed to distinguish the degrees of historical fulfilment that characterized different regions and societies. It marked the progress and modernity that single parts of it—individuals, peoples, races, nations, classes, regions, continents, states—had achieved in the process. In Vidal's view, history was needed to understand the contingency of geographical change. Yet "civilization" as the overarching measure of all things geographical also allows us to grasp what "geography in its relations with history" actually meant. Like for most of "his" German authors, for Vidal, Western philosophical speculation regarding the purpose of history appears to be ultimately the hen, and geography its egg.

And like in the case of "his" Germans, this was the reason why the Mediterranean could not just be a sea but had to be a "world." It was a geographically homogeneous entity that only an insensible person would miss to make out empirically: "Around the Mediterranean there is a special climate, which is distinguished above all by the mild temperature of winters and the dryness of summers. These conditions are favourable to evergreen trees, such as the olive tree, the laurel, the lentisks, the myrtles, whose dark green foliage betrays the intensity of the light which colours them. (…) the vine and the olive tree are cultivated on terraces between rock walls," and so on. But what was even more important was that "the Mediterranean opened up [Europe] more and more to the influences of the sea, to trade, to exchanges of civilization."[8] Therefore,

> it was no accident that for a long time the history of the Mediterranean was intertwined with that of civilization itself. There alone Europe had found itself in contact with Asia and Africa; and when, in antiquity and in the Middle Ages,

7 Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* [1767] (Cadell et al. 1793), 2.

8 Paul Vidal de La Blache, *Autour de la France: états et nations de l'Europe* (Delagrave, 1889), 7, 27, 516.

> the Indo-European and Semitic races disputed the conduct of the world, the Mediterranean was the necessary theatre of those decisive struggles which are called the Punic wars or the crusades.[9]

The redundancy between this short selection of quotations and those cited in the Introduction and Chapter Four may already suffice as proof of our first two arguments regarding Vidal's role as a transmitter of German geophilosophy to French geohistory. Nevertheless, we will revisit similar statements when discussing Braudel and other authors. Before turning to the popularization of the Mediterranean metaphor, however, we should examine the significance of Vidal's teachings for the transnational prehistory and early history of geopolitics, which provides another intellectual framework essential for understanding the development of this metaphor in the twentieth century.

1 Geopolitics and Geohistory: From Ratzel to Braudel

Building upon Enlightenment traditions, "human geography" of the nineteenth century had already tried to explain how the almost perennial structures of the Earth's surface and its climate had intervened in, and codetermined, the course of political and economic history and how they had shaped the imagination and "spirit" of the peoples inhabiting those spaces. Outside the realm of the political, as we have argued in Chapter Four, such findings mean next to nothing. As a consequence, we have concluded, the word "geopolitics" can be seen to a certain extent as a pleonasm. However, when the neologism came up at the end of the nineteenth century, it distinguished itself from the previous geographical tradition not only by certain positivist leanings but also by the intensity and systematicity by which it tried to draw practical lessons for political action from the teachings of geography. Already in the 1870s, Vidal de la Blache gave practical political advice, such as when remarking that by "the conquest of Algeria, France, already the master of Corsica, secured a position whose importance has not escaped its neighbours, since Morocco has already felt the hand of Spain, and Tunis sometimes looks with concern towards Italy," indirectly suggesting that France should observe and perhaps consider seizing Tunisia and Morocco as well.[10]

In the early 1900s, political indications based on "what history and geography have to tell us" earned recognition as a distinct discipline with a field of

9 Vidal de La Blache, *La péninsule européenne*, 17–18.

10 Vidal de La Blache, *La péninsule européenne*, 21.

investigation that added political sciences and ethnography to the traditional liaison between geography and history. The latter remained more on the background of disciplinary definitions but was still fundamental, since political geography argued with the past to single out its methods and rules, assessed the present with those rules, and, on this basis, formulated proposals for the future. In doing so, "geopolitics" also became publicist and journalist activity promoted outside academia by political or private associations and publishing houses close to government, industry, and military circles, nurturing the skepticism among the academic establishment regarding the solidity of its findings. Therefore, the academic recognition of geopolitics remained limited.

Against the backdrop of British and European, imperial and colonial, world domination in full display, geopolitics' major founding texts usually paid attention to the sea or ocean as a political and strategic asset and compared it to continental environments. The result was a paradigmatic juxtaposition of land powers and sea powers. The United States Navy captain and historian Alfred Mahan popularized this debate. His ideas were promptly picked up in political and military circles, by Great Britain and the USA, but also, for example, by Kaiser Wilhelm II, with the intent to legitimize his *Flottenpolitik*. It influenced thinkers such as Rudolf Kjellén, Halford Mackinder, Karl Haushofer, Carl Schmitt, and Nicholas Spykman, that is, some of the most outstanding scholars of the early twentieth century with whom geopolitics has been associated, in some cases retroactively because the word "geopolitics" was not even used in their works.[11] In particular in the Anglosphere, strands of thought crafted by Mackinder and others, like Spykman, have been nurtured, if sometimes controversially discussed, throughout the whole of the twentieth century. The geopolitical tradition culminated with the works and deeds of Zbigniew Brzezinski. This does not mean that everyone agreed with Mahan's thesis regarding the geopolitical advantage of sea power and the "profound determining influence of maritime strength."[12] On the contrary, Mackinder and Schmitt, for example, refuted, if for different reasons, the trust in the predominance of sea power. By affirming the predominance of land power, they nevertheless acknowledged the theoretical and methodological importance of Mahan's distinction.[13]

11 Gearóid Ó Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics. The Politics of Writing Global Space* (Routledge, 1996), 23.

12 Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660–1783* (Little, Brown and Comp., 1890), iii.

13 Halford Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality. A Study in the Politics of Reconstruction* (Holt and Comp., 1919), 186; Carl Schmitt, *The Nomos of the Earth in the International Law of the* Jus Publicum Europaeum [1950] (Telos Press, 2003), 42–45.

The Mediterranean Metaphor in Geopolitical Writings

What interests us here, however, is not the content of the general debate on political geography and geopolitics, but to highlight how the Mediterranean, in line with the geophilosophical and geohistorical foundations of the early nineteenth century, in the twentieth century was still referenced as the "mother of all examples" even by texts dedicated to subjects external to the "Mediterranean World." To open a geopolitical treatise on whatever subject with observations regarding Mediterranean history, for example, on the Roman Empire and its "maritime control over the entire shoreline of the Mediterranean Sea,"[14] has apparently become an unbroken tradition for over a century—a tradition that Mahan inaugurated. In his 1890 book *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*, in an effort to show that in history "sea power had a strategic bearing and weight which has received scant recognition," the author started his demonstration with a Mediterranean example, the Second Punic War. Notwithstanding a lack of "full knowledge necessary for tracing in detail its influence," it left no doubt in him that sea power "was a determining factor."[15]

Other seminal texts of geopolitics selected the Mediterranean as an exemplary case: in *Das Meer als Quelle der Völkergröße*, published in 1900 by Friedrich Ratzel, the Mediterranean even becomes a specific analytical category which he distinguishes from the open sea, on the one hand, and closed waters, on the other. He detects similar natural properties for two other "Mediterraneans": the Caribbean and the Austral-Asian. As he saw it, these other two Mediterraneans would converge with the geopolitical features of what he called "our Mediterranean," the model they would conform to further down the road of history.[16] While several authors later adopted his open sea, middle sea, and closed sea taxonomy in the same or other cases,[17] the description of the Mediterranean as a vanguard of history should be underlined. In Ratzel's book, the Mediterranean also serves, as in Mahan's pioneering work, as the

14 Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard. American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives* (Basic Books, 1997), 10.

15 Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power*, 14.

16 Friedrich Ratzel, *Das Meer als Quelle der Völkergröße. Eine politisch-geographische Studie* (Oldenbourg, 1900), 19–25.

17 Examples for this use: Herrmann Lautensach, "Die Mittelmeere als geopolitische Kraftfelder," *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* 1, no. 1 (1924): 36–47; Ernst Herrmann, *Das Nordpolarmeer: Das Mittelmeer von Morgen* (Taubert, 1949); AfG, Nachlass Herrmann, box 990, shelfmark 160 Rezension: Das Nordpolarmeer; also, Franco Farinelli, *Geografia: Un'introduzione ai modelli del mondo* (Einaudi, 2003), 98.

exemplary case, which has the privilege of offering the first demonstration of the thesis that the author proposes. The thesis is similar to Mahan's; however, here it is not the Phoenicians but, besides Venice, the Greek example that must illustrate it. "The war plan of Pericles," the author writes at a certain point, "proofs full awareness about the natural force of a sea power."[18]

It is again in the Mediterranean, again in Greece, where Mackinder, in his 1919 publication *Democratic Ideals and Reality*, fires back at the thesis of sea power supremacy. He selects the same geographical setting, but he does it to demonstrate the exact reverse: "No Greek of full blood but looked upon a Macedonian as a sort of bastard! But his position in the broad root of the Greek peninsula enabled the Macedonian to conquer the Greek sea-base (…)."[19] For Mackinder, the Mediterranean was not necessarily a springboard for worldwide expansion. On the contrary, before the Suez channel was inaugurated, its waterways detached Europe from the Indian and Pacific Oceans. The Mediterranean rather resembled the southern moat of the European fortress, or part of a "natural provision for the intimacy of a family of nations."[20] For Carl Schmitt, "the Cretans, the Greeks, the Carthaginians, the Romans in the Mediterranean," with their "extensions of law to the space of the free sea," had achieved "world-historical events of revolutionary significance." But also, for Schmitt, there was a difference between the extension of land power over an almost closed body of water like the Mediterranean and the width of the open oceans that would not allow such an extension to stabilize and therefore renew the primacy of the territorial dimension in the era of European world conquest.[21]

In short, Mahan, Ratzel, Mackinder, and Schmitt arrived at diverging and partially conflicting conclusions regarding the importance of the maritime space for the development of military force and political power. Nevertheless, their works referred to a common Mediterranean metaphor, insofar as "the Mediterranean" in their texts alike represents a complex of meanings that embraces different and sometimes contradictory single metaphors, allegories, and parables that all rotate around the same idea of history and its geographical foundations. Accordingly, for the above-quoted authors, Mediterranean

18 Ratzel, *Das Meer als Quelle*, 59. Like Mahan, Ratzel underlined the importance of sea power but similarly to Mackinder, he also acknowledged the importance of continental power because a true world power had to excel in both; Klinke, *Life, Earth, Colony*, 122–23.

19 Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals*, 61.

20 Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals*, 62; for older views of the Mediterranean as a barrier, see Matthew D'Auria, "Protean boundaries," 31–45.

21 Schmitt, *The Nomos of the Earth*, 44, 172.

antiquity served as a model case for their geopolitical deductions regarding land and sea power and other questions of their own present and future. It remained the exemplary place, whether "civilization" used the maritime space to gather its forces necessary for moving another step in the predetermined direction of historical fulfilment or used it, on the contrary, as a moat to secure a flank of its continental or Atlantic development. Consequently, it was up to Pericles' fleet, on the one hand, and Alexander's land army, on the other, to deliver a parable for the principle that, according to the authors, had been proven right time and again. No other place in the world seemed to possess the same persuasive authority to stage such a universally valid demonstration. Most scholars of geopolitics agreed that it was the birthplace of both Greek and Roman antiquity and "the Christian community as a universal system,"[22] to use the Swedish political scientist Rudolf Kjellén's expression. Similarly, the German historian Theobald Fischer spoke of "an area of Mediterranean culture where the origins of our European culture lie, and which consist of Christianity and classical erudition. Since the nineteenth century they have become an oceanic, and even a world, culture."[23]

Hence, at the time when geopolitics "proper" took its first steps, the "Mediterranean World" was confirmed as the place "where it all began." The general axioms underlying the geographical and philosophical writings of the nineteenth century, by Hegel, Humboldt, Ritter, Reclus, and others, were upheld. Nevertheless, it may be worth taking a closer look at the historical value that the authors of the twentieth century attributed to this particular geographical partition. If Ratzel's references to history in his 1900 treatise were apparently more "technical," in his lecture manuscript fragments conserved at Leipzig Archiv für Geographie, he reveals a more explicit teleological view. He discusses the role of the Mediterranean in a lecture on political ethnography under the title "The Oriental Question." Apparently, the Leipzig professor drafted and revised the related notes between 1895 and 1903. Ratzel states: "Because the culture of Central Asia expanded to the West through the Mediterranean, the Mediterranean countries acquired earlier a position of historical importance than those of Northern Europe. This is why they until today conserve their characteristics of an old historical age."[24] One of Fischer's statements is similar: "While the Mediterranean as a focus of culture had little connections to Africa neither as a donor nor as a beneficiary, to Europe it

22 Rudolf Kjellén, "What inspires a League of Nations," *The Living Age*, April 17, 1920, 138.

23 Fischer, *Mittelmeerbilder*, 1.

24 AfG, Nachlass Ratzel, box 155, shelfmark 348, Die orientalische Frage, folio 23.

has almost exclusively given, from Asia almost exclusively taken."[25] The passage in Ratzel's text fragment situates the Mediterranean within what Hans-Dietrich Schultz characterizes as a culture teleology.[26]

We should keep in mind here that *Kultur* at the time was the German pseudo-opposite and de facto synonym to the French concept of *civilisation*, at least as far as the teleological view of history is concerned. The concept of *Kulturstufen* implies that German scholars viewed history as a progression from lower to higher stages, just as the concept of civilization did. That the more or less convincing differences discussed by Kant, Hegel, Humboldt, and others were in the late nineteenth century translated into an unbridgeable opposition,[27] and civilization supplanted by *Kulturentwicklung* as the kernel process of history, apparently had more to do with refuting the intellectual primate of the "French enemy" than with other reasons. Such national variants were perhaps of great political and propagandistic, but little conceptual, relevance.

In the same lecture manuscript, Ratzel explains to his students that "the Mediterranean's central geographical position between Europe, Asia and Africa transformed it, since the dawn of Antiquity and up to our days, into an arena where the west-eastern contrasts (…) are disputed and compensated." After some additional wording inserted later, the phrase went: "an arena where the west-eastern *contacts are established and* contrasts (…) disputed and compensated."[28] His later insertion, which consolidates the trope of that sea as a "zone of contact and conflict" appears to reflect the back and forth in Western descriptions of places where civilizations are supposed to "hybridize" and/or clash. Within this range of possibilities, both cooperative and conflicting, political actors can thus be confident of finding experts who explain the scientifically unquestionable, geographical and historical, necessities of either peace or war.

The adaptation of the planet's surface to the needs of the teleological narrative, as highlighted by Schultz, can also be seen when we consider "the Mediterranean's central geographical position between Europe, Asia and Africa" asserted by Ratzel or Vidal and others before and after them. For these thinkers, the Mediterranean's "centrality" is visibly not a question of changeable perspectives according to variable parameters, which would make of cen-

25 Fischer, *Mittelmeerbilder*, 1.

26 Schultz, "Die Platzierung der Türkei," 20.

27 See Pietro Rossi, "Civiltà," *Enciclopedia delle scienze sociali*, vol. 1 (Treccani, 1991), 800–802.

28 AfG, Nachlass Ratzel, box 155, shelfmark 348, Die orientalische Frage, folio 20; the later inserted words are highlighted.

ter and periphery more ephemeral categories. Rather, it is a geographical property carved in stone—that is, geological formations—and determined by landmasses, waters, and climate. One may ask why, if physical properties determine centrality, the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea, the Caspian Sea, the Caribbean Sea, Lake Michigan, or any other "middle seas" or water masses encircled, or almost encircled, by land masses were considered less "central" than the Mediterranean. The most likely answer is that, unlike in other cases, the Mediterranean situation was different: the names of smaller adjoining regions—"Europe," "Asia," and "Africa," as labeled by ancient Greeks or Romans—were expanded into "continents," each assigned a specific place in the hierarchy of the Mediterranean-centered narrative of world history.

German "Determinism" Versus French "Possibilism"?

The first use of the concept of "geopolitics" apparently was by the Swedish political scientist Rudolf Kjellén in his 1899 *Introduction to the Geography of Sweden*. Influenced by Ratzel's geography, he defined geopolitics as an analysis of the impact that geographic factors have on international relations.[29] With the state seen as the principal subject of history, his concern was for "the relationship between the anatomy of power and its geographical foundation."[30] The conceptualization of states as living organisms aligned with Ratzel's biogeographical approach, since political entities affirm their power by "coping with space," which, for Ratzel, was tantamount to "living."[31] Viewed through the lens of evolutionist theories, geopolitics thus framed international relations as an arena in which states strive, with varying degrees of success, for self-preservation. Observing them as a biologist would observe animal species adapting to environmental conditions, and developing a morphology of geographical factors influencing their behaviour, appeared more "scientific" than relying solely on arbitrary records of human will.

Nevertheless, the originality of geopolitics in treating states as living organisms should not be overstated. In the Western tradition, conceiving of the commonwealth, or state, as analogous to the body was nothing new. Roman law considered it a corporation with its own legal subjectivity, and the analogy with a living body was likewise postulated for the state by early modern con-

29 See Bertil Häggman, "Rudolf Kjellén," *Nationalencyklopedin*, vol. 11 (Bokförlaget Bra Böcker, 1993), 67.

30 Silviu Costachie, "German School of Geopolitics. Evolution, Ideas, Prospects," *Revista Română de Geografie Politică* 8, no. 2 (2011): 274.

31 Friedrich Ratzel, *Der Lebensraum: Eine biogeographische Studie* (Laupp, 1901), 12–13.

tract theory.[32] On the other hand, to affirm the state's chief role in history, the idealistic tradition does not require an analogy with a body when the "spirit" suffices. As we have seen, Franz Schuselka, in his nineteenth-century Hegelian version, did not need biology to make the state the principal agent for the fulfilment of history's higher purpose. Perhaps, for a geographer of the late nineteenth century, relying on the evolutionist analogy to explain how states behave expressed a willingness to leave such teleology behind.

In fact, teleology is quite an intricate and disputed aspect of biological theories as well, especially in the case of Darwin's and Haeckel's evolutionism.[33] That Darwin's views on human history remained in the canon of teleological thinking[34] is no proof per se that his biological theory was contaminated by the same principle. If we assume it was, then of course teleological theories of history and society could easily borrow from Darwin's biological theories. If we assume it was not, we should not airily speak of a Darwinist evolutionary method applied to social theory before a closer examination of the theory in question.

Of Ratzel it is said that he "was not a supporter of the theory of progress and has repeatedly rejected it. However, he never did explain what distinguishes his conception from the others."[35] Apparently, he intended to distance himself from the earlier idealistic foundations of German geography and may be considered, by and large, an "evolutionist." According to Gearóid Ó Tuathail, however, Ratzel's vision was in fact teleological, and like that of Mackinder and later geopolitical theorists, as well as of "social Darwinists" in general, it was neo-Lamarckian rather than truly Darwinist.[36] Social Darwinists mostly had some sort of nature's "higher purpose" in mind and at the time, Lamarck's observed tendency toward growing complexity in the development from "lower" to "higher" forms of life tended to be read as a negation of the intrinsic purposelessness of evolution (whether this interpretation was truly Lamarckian is another question still).

In this respect, it would appear difficult to state any fundamental divide between Ratzel and Vidal de la Blache. Both of the above-quoted references

32 Harold J. Berman, *Law and Revolution*, vol. 1 (Harvard University Press, 1983), 215; Hugo Grotius, *The Rights of War and Peace* [1625] (Walter Dunne, 1901), 118–19, 354.

33 James G. Lennox, "Darwin was a teleologist," *Biology and Philosophy* 8, no. 4 (1993): 409–21; Michael T. Ghiselin, "Darwin's language may seem teleological, but his thinking is another matter," *Biology and Philosophy* 9, no. 4 (1994): 489–92.

34 Klinke*, Life, Earth, Colony*, 143, 179.

35 Fritz Hesse, "Das Gesetz der wachsenden Räume," *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* 1, no. 1 (1924): 1.

36 Ó Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics*, 22–23.

to "civilization," the "Orient," and other recurring tropes and commonplaces strongly suggest that neither author left the wider terrain of teleological thinking. No matter how much both perhaps wanted to overcome the idealism of earlier geographers, their understanding of human and political geography ultimately remained informed by their predecessors' philosophy of history.

However, Ratzel's "determinism," which several critics contrast with Vidal's "possibilism," is not the predetermination of purpose as discussed above. Rather, what is meant is the force of environmental necessities and constraints (like those exerted by geophysical conditions) that might overturn the wishes of human actors in determining the outcome of historical processes. That this outcome would be decided by just one or the other—geophysical condition or free will—was nevertheless a predicament that neither Ratzel nor Vidal would have accepted. For Ratzel, in general, biogeographical changes are fundamentally indeterministic, which is why only plausible but unverifiable hypotheses regarding the past and the future can be derived from geographic observation. By definition, life, in any of its forms, enjoys a degree of freedom from surrounding conditions, to which even "the caterpillar is by no means always as slavishly bound as was thought."[37] Regarding human geography, Vidal underlined how the complexity of human-environment interaction excludes the establishment of timeless "laws" and requires instead reliance on the individual history and morphology of geographic conformations.[38] Similar statements hardly distance their authors from idealistic geophilosophy, as the dialectics of "spirit" and physical circumstance had been exactly Hegel's point.

Indeed, following Hegel, dialectics, rather than exterior constraints or free will, determines history. The "determinism vs possibilism" divide constructed in the 1920s appears to lack such dialectical understanding. After Lucien Febvre had formulated it in 1922, the allegation of "environmental determinism" became a frequent critique moved against geopolitics in the tradition of Ratzel.[39] Following Febvre's verdict, part of this critique translated the question

37 Ratzel, *Der Lebensraum*, 15, 86–87.

38 These aspects are discussed in a seminar paper apparently presented by Horst Ebersohl during the winter term 1962–63 at the Universität des Saarlandes. We infer the probable authorship from a handwritten note, "Referat Ebersohl WS/62/63," on the first sheet (AfG, Nachlass Schmithüsen, Box 925, Shelfmark 6/187–201, *Unterlagen zu Vidal de la Blache*). The likely author was a student of Josef Schmithüsen's and later a high school teacher in Saarland.

39 Lucien Febvre, *La Terre et l'Evolution humaine* (Renaissance du Livre, 1922); Ian Klinke underlines the difficulty of a univocal judgement regarding Ratzel's "determinism" but on balance leans towards seeing him as determinist, with "space" rather than "environment" as the determinant; at the same time, he accredits Vidal with inspiring a "distinct" French possibilist "school"; see Klinke, *Life, Earth, Colony*, 104, 121, 129, 162, 191.

of "possibilism" and "determinism" into a supposed divergency between "national schools" of French and German geography.[40] How realistic was this juxtaposition?

At the time of its emergence, both Ratzel and Vidal had passed away. Karl Haushofer, the retired German Major General who acknowledged the teachings of Ratzel and Kjellén, was on his way toward becoming the most publicized German political geographer. Although the main target of French accusations of "determinism," he did not consider environment the only determinant of history. On the contrary, he wrote that it was up to geopolitics to find out "which transformations are only apparently due to mere cultural and power motivations, but actually depend on geographically determined causes, and which others instead depend only on human will which asserts itself independently from environmental and physiographical factors or even against them."[41] This was not dissimilar to what Vidal had stated when pointing out that "the influence of the physical world remains subordinated to that of the free forces whose interplay composes human history."[42] French geographer André Siegfried, on the other hand, maintained that the "geographical environment determines a host of things," among which he listed the political nature of states and the character of a "civilization."[43] On the level of detail, methodological differences certainly matter, but on the level of generalization, it appears difficult to trace the existence of a precise conceptual divide, if there was one, along national lines.

That the determinism–possibilism dichotomy is questionable is also the opinion of Nicolas Ginsburger, who has investigated its emergence from the context of the post-World War I atmosphere. French intellectuals of the time had to come to grips with the "fundamental reference in French geography and social sciences" that Ratzel had represented "at the beginning of the twentieth century" and that now looked uncomfortable in view of pan-German evocations of his heritage. In actual fact, Ginsburger maintains, Ratzel's "so-called naturalistic determinism" was even "surpassed by Vidal in France."[44] According to Guilherme Ribeiro, Vidal's geography united the regional knowl-

40 Marco Antonsich, "*Geopolitica*: The 'Geographical and Imperial Consciousness' of Fascist Italy," *Geopolitics* 14 (2009): 265.

41 Karl Haushofer, *Geopolitik des Pazifischen Ozeans. Studien über die Wechselbeziehungen zwischen Geographie und Geschichte* (Vowinckel, 1924), 4.

42 Vidal de La Blache, *La péninsule européenne,* 28.

43 André Siegfried, *Vue général de la Méditerranée* (Gallimard, 1943), 11.

44 Nicolas Ginsburger, "Ratzel contre la géopolitique? Référence allemande et géographie politique dans la géographie française de l'entre-deux-guerres," *Geographica Helvetica* 78 (2023): 65–67, 72.

edge of France with the patriotic promotion of empire and was not as far from Ratzel as Febvre suggested.[45] We might add how to a certain extent the determinism–possibilism dichotomy appeared to revenge an earlier one, the above-mentioned one between *Kultur* and *civilisation*, invented by German intellectuals before the war to disparage French influence on German thought. In both cases, national rivalries seemed to matter more than substantial theoretical divides.

Geopolitik and *Geopolitica* Along the Berlin-Rome Axis

A second critique of geopolitics, that of pseudo-scientific political opportunism, was even more powerful and also more to the point. Many critics from the academic establishment deemed geopolitics a publicist's or political practice rather than a science. The French political geographer Jacques Ancel contended that what really determined Haushofer's "pseudo-geographic" theories were revanchist and expansionist ambitions, since he and his *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* "claim to meet a 'just and natural border', *echte Grenze*, every time it fits the purposes of pan-Germanism, while in the absence of contracting physical limits they are lead to establish a *Kulturgrenze*, a 'frontier of civilization'."[46] Similarly, the exiled Czechoslovak journalist Walter Tschuppik noted in 1941 that "Haushofer's 'geopolitics' was a strange science, a mixture of geography, ethnography as well as economic and political speculations, which, as long as critique remained free in Germany, was rejected by serious geographers." Haushofer's chair at Munich University, he continued, "did not serve scientific purposes but Hitler's propaganda." Tschuppik went on with complaining that "his word creations have become famous slogans, which unfortunately have been frequently accepted and quoted also abroad."[47] The author credited Haushofer's activity as a publicist with popularizing catchphrases such as *Volk ohne Raum*, *Lebensraum*, and *Grossraumwirtschaft*, without detailing who actually had invented them.

Concepts such as *Lebensraum* and *Grossraumwirtschaft* had become central indeed in the language of Nazi leaders. *Lebensraum* had been introduced into the lexicon of geography by neither Haushofer nor Ratzel but by Oscar Peschel, and its later political meanings also drew on various sources, not just

45 Guilherme Ribeiro, "La géographie vidalienne et la géopolitique," *Géographie et cultures* 75 (2010): 247–62.

46 Jacques Ancel, *Géographie des frontières* (Gallimard, 1938), 1; the work was a response to Karl Haushofer, *Grenzen in ihrer geographischen und politischen Bedeutung* (Vowinckel, 1927).

47 Walter Tschuppik, "Eurafrica," *Die Zeitung*, July 8, 1941, 1.

geopolitical ones but also Walter Christaller's economics of space, among others.[48] The unstoppable technological advancement of the means of production, transport, and communication made economically integrated transnational spaces the compelling result of a "natural law of development," according to the German minister of economy and president of Reichsbank, Walther Funk. He expressed this idea in his contribution to a 1942 Berlin lecture series dedicated to the coming post-war Europe, the suggestive title of which was "European Economic Community." Funk remarked in his speech that the *Grossraumgedanke* "has been picked up immediately even by politicians who are under the spell of the English plutocratic system."[49] In June 1944, the head of the German planning office for war production and president of the think tank *Europakreis*, Hans Kehrl, underlined that after the war "Germany will not strive for an economic monopoly, but for close economic cooperation between all European nations."[50]

The definite shape of this cooperation was difficult to predict, as it depended on unforeseeable political and military dynamics. Regarding the Mediterranean, German geopolitics appreciated that fascism finally went beyond Italy's traditional "hypnotic staring at the Adriatic Sea" and took a more thorough expansionist drive toward Africa and a more active role in contrasting British and French might in the area.[51] At the height of the civil war and after, nationalist Spain was hardly considered a reliable ally in Mediterranean geopolitics but rather "a world on its own"; its Mediterranean objectives were understood as being limited to the improbable reconquest of Gibraltar and the reinforcement of its Moroccan possessions.[52] While Hitler explicitly excluded German desires of Mediterranean dominance, the Nazi leadership propended towards a formal and informal recognition of Italy's leading role there. Hitler stuck to his line even after fascism's defeat in 1943, when the recognition of Italy's heritage of Rome's *Mare Nostrum* turned out to be merely theoretical.[53]

48 Klinke, *Life, Earth, Colony*, 82, 179–80.

49 Bundesarchiv Koblenz (BuA), R 3, Reichsministerium für Rüstung und Kriegsproduktion (R.u.K.), 1941, Vortrag von Walther Funk vom 15. Januar 1942.

50 BuA, R 3, Reichsministerium für Rüstung und Kriegsproduktion (R.u.K.), 1941, Monatsbesprechung des "Europakreises" im Hotel Esplanade, Berlin, 27. Juni 1944.

51 The quotation is drawn from Mohr, *Politische Probleme*, 34; see also, Adolf Dresler, "Italienische Probleme," Teil 2, *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* 4, no. 10 (1927): 881; Boveri, *Das Weltgeschehen*, 165–97; Albert Prinzing, *England und Italien im Mittelmeer* (Junker und Dünnhaupt, 1940), 5–32.

52 Günther Herwig, *Kampfplatz Spanien und Mittelmeer* (Verlag Münchener Zeitung, 1939), 5–14.

53 Lepenies, *Die Macht am Mittelmeer*, 270–72.

The economic cooperation and competition between the two Axis partners occurred through various phases. Once the major conflicts between Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany had been settled diplomatically by 1939, Spain and the countries of the Danube basin and the Balkans remained areas of overlapping geoeconomic interest. The competition was attenuated by diplomatic agreements, also because bilateral cooperation became imperative with the evolution of warfare in the Balkans and North Africa and the complementary requirements of war production, with Italy in need of German coal and Germany in need of Italian labor.[54] For the rest, "Berlin and Rome divided Europe, Africa and Asia Minor into two economic spaces, one with a continental centre of gravity and the other with a Mediterranean one."[55]

As the former German ambassador to Rome and executive of the Central European Economic Congress, Ulrich von Hassell, wrote, the German people were subjected to "other conditions of life than Italy, a Latin country, genuinely Catholic, surrounded for the most part by the sea, a Mediterranean power boldly reaching out towards Africa, and in continuous competition with France, Spain and England, with the Balkan states and those of Asia Minor."[56] In the summer of 1944, with Germany in retreat and Italy defeated and occupied, industrialist Hugo Stinnes Jr still expressed his conviction that a German-led European customs union was to be erected in the near future, which Italy probably would not join.[57] Was this because Italy was now defeated and divided into two hostile zones of occupation? Or did Stinnes still hope in a German-led neo-fascist resurrection after which Italy would be administrating, as the doctrine foresaw, its own Mediterranean–African *Grosswirtschaftsraum*, whereby German influence would however be guaranteed? After 1943, with half of Italy occupied and governed by a client regime, toying with similar prospects seemed interesting again. Haushofer sublimated the German occupation "as the renewal of a thousand-year struggle for Rome and as the culmination of the construction of a Pan-European empire."[58]

54 Rolf Petri, *Von der Autarkie zum Wirtschaftswunder. Wirtschaftspolitik und industrieller Wandel in Italien 1935–1963* (Niemeyer, 2001), 216–33.

55 Maximiliane Rieder, *Deutsch-italienische Wirtschaftsbeziehungen: Kontinuitäten und Brüche, 1936–1957* (Campus, 2003), 193.

56 Ulrich von Hassell, "La missione Europea di Dante," *Giovane Europa* 1–2 (1943): 50; in 1944, von Hassell was convicted of being part of a conspiracy to overthrow Hitler, and executed.

57 BuA, R 3, Reichsministerium für Rüstung und Kriegsproduktion (R.u.K.), 1941, Brief Hugo Stinnes vom 20. Juni 1944 an Dr. Köster, Planungsamt, Berlin.

58 Nicola Bassoni, "Karl Haushofer as a 'Pioneer' of National Socialist Cultural Diplomacy in Fascist Italy," *Central European History* 52 (2019): 429.

As for Italy, the Duce, "a former geography schoolteacher himself," as Marco Antonsich reminds us, "believed along with Napoléon that geography was an 'immutable element which influences the destiny of peoples'."[59] Based on this assumption, he cultivated his own ideas of *Grossraum* and *Lebensraum*. Already in 1919 Mussolini declared that "for others the Mediterranean is a road, for us it is our life"—a *spazio vitale*. In a 1926 speech, the Duce underlined how the ancient people of Rome, originally herders and planters, had been forced by geography to become mariners.[60] He also had marble plaques attached to the Capitol depicting the spread of the empire around the *Mare Interno* between the eighth century BCE and 117 CE.[61] During the years of the fascist regime, Italian scholars of geopolitics supported the government's expansionist "greater Mediterranean strategy" toward the Adriatic and Balkan area as well as toward Africa. To the traditional rhetoric of *Mare Nostrum* they added "a new focus on the geographical features of this space to further Italy's hegemonic aspirations. The central location of Italy was presented as the key factor which justified Italy's leading role in the Mediterranean." Besides history, this role was argued mainly from a geo-economic point of view, with little accent on "race" if compared to German discourses.[62]

Nevertheless, in the late 1930s Italian geopolitical thought overlapped with the German one on several points, converging toward a kind of transnational *Grossraum* framework, "a European imperial idea." Within this framework, the Berlin–Rome Axis was seen as the central pillar, whereby both parties tried to centralize their own position, one by underlining the Latin–Roman heredity of *Mare Nostrum*, the other insisting on the Pan-European precedent of the Holy Roman Empire. The latter aspect was accentuated when, after "Badoglio's betrayal," Germany felt charged "again" with the "salvation of Rome."[63]

Undoubtedly, German geopolitics had a certain impact on Italian academic and journalistic developments. Still, it hardly affected any of Fascist Italy's foreign policy decisions. Haushofer held contacts with several Italian geographers, and his *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* inspired the publication, between 1939 and 1942, of *Geopolitica*. Many leading figures of the Italian Geographical Society snubbed the periodical directed by Ernesto Massi and Giorgio Roletto for being a journalistic enterprise. "It was not *Geopolitica*'s nationalist stance or its

59 Antonsich, "*Geopolitica*," 261.
60 Dresler, "Italienische Probleme," 882.
61 Boveri, *Das Weltgeschehen*, 167–68.
62 Antonsich, "*Geopolitica*," 266–68.
63 Bassoni, "Karl Haushofer," 432, 448.

putting itself at the service of the expansionist project of the regime which bothered these representatives of the geographical establishment," as the majority of geographers shared those same stances.[64] *Geopolitica* itself "represented both an adoption of the German model of geopolitics — as attested by the close collaboration between Haushofer and Italian geopoliticians — and an autonomous development of Italian geography."[65]

In a contribution to *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*, Massi debunked the topoi of the physical, climatic, and social homogeneity of the Mediterranean region in favor of a concept of unity in diversity. At the same time, he served well-known topoi by projecting the clash between Orient and Occident, nomadism and agriculture, back into antiquity and beyond. He likewise re-proposed the clichés of the sea as a pool of influences from different "civilities" and a space of contact between three continents. According to Massi, the "geopolitical memory of the Roman Empire" served to keep the "imperial thought alive (…) in the conscience of Italians," making it the fulcrum of their history. But the backbone of the old empire had been horizontal running from west to east, while "the new imperial cycle" under fascism was developing vertically, from north to south between Europe and Africa, as an extension of the Rome–Berlin Axis.[66] In general, Italian political geographers tried to keep a "middle ground between German determinism and French possibilism or, better, a 'balance' among different paradigms (environmental determinism, possibilism and geographical humanism)."[67]

Regarding the German school of geopolitics of the inter-war and war years and its tight connections with the Nazi movement, a long debate has developed more recently in reaction to post-1989 attempts at rehabilitation.[68] Several authors, while polemical towards the German school, accredit instead the scientific value of the "Anglo-Saxon" one;[69] others conclude that some schol-

64 Antonsich, "*Geopolitica*," 264.

65 Bassoni, "Karl Haushofer," 439.

66 Ernesto Massi, "Römische und Italienische Mittelmeer-Geopolitik," *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* 16, no. 8–9 (1939): 562, 564.

67 Antonsich, "*Geopolitica*," 265.

68 See Frank Ebeling, *Geopolitik. Karl Haushofer und seine Raumwissenschaft 1919–1945* (Akademie Verlag, 1994); contra: Werner Köster, "Der 'Raum' als Kategorie der Resubstantialisierung. Analysen zur neuerlichen Konjunktur einer deutschen Semantik," in *TopoGraphien der Moderne. Medien zur Repräsentation und Konstruktion von Räumen*, ed. Robert Stockhammer (Fink, 2005), 48.

69 Nils Hoffmann, *Renaissance der Geopolitik? Die deutsche Sicherheitspolitik nach dem Kalten Krieg* (Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2012), 34.

ars exaggerate the differences between the two to protect newly booming international geopolitics from blame.[70] No doubt, Haushofer and his colleague Kurt Vowinckel supported Hitler's regime and wars of aggression. They even evoked Mackinder to liken the Soviets to "bandits of the steppe." During the Second World War, American author Henry Hatfield, for his part, associated Haushofer's ideas with Mackinder's.[71] Nonetheless, depicting German and Italian geopolitics before 1945 as an absolute exception from, or even a conceptual antipode to, European mainstream political geography would seem an exaggeration. On the whole, continuities prevailed over breaches in this case too. As we will learn, the term *Eurafrika*, which Tschuppik presented to his readers as if it were Haushofer's invention, between the 1920s and the 1960s was in fact a widely heeded concept not just in Germany and Italy but in France and many other countries. Several political forces promoted it, including those of conservative, centrist, liberal, or social democrat orientation. Within this same democratic political spectrum there also existed Europeanist geopolitical conceptualizations that, no less than the fascist ones, relied on schemes of racialized settler-colonial projects in the search for European "vital spaces" and economic resources in Africa and Asia.

Geophilosophical Tropes and the French Colonial Experience

It was not just German or Italian geopolitics that displayed high degrees of opportunistic translation of current foreign-policy interests into theories that tried to legitimize these interests by evoking the allegedly irresistible force of some structural *longue durée*. The same can be said of the Anglo-American traditions descending from Mahan or Mackinder, whose ideas now look back at a century of public consent manufacturing by industry and military-related "think tanks."[72] *Prima facie* one may concede to the French academics of the time, like the political geographer Jacques Ancel and the representative of geographical humanism, André Siegfried,[73] who before the

70 Wiebeke Böge, *Die Einteilung der Erde in Großräume. Zum Weltbild der deutschsprachigen Geographie seit 1871* (Institut für Geographie, 1997), 160–64.

71 Karl Haushofer, "Die größte Aufgabe," *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* 18, no. 7 (1941): 369–70; Henry C. Hatfield, "Haushoferism," *New Republic*, 108, February (1943): 155–58; Kurt Vowinckel, "US-Amerika und die Geopolitik," *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* 21, no. 4 (1944): 136–39.

72 For a concise, if by now outdated, institutional overview of the American foreign-policy-related think-tank industry, see Donald E. Abelson, "Think Tanks and U.S. Foreign Policy: A Historical Perspective," *An Electronic Journal of the U.S. Department of State* 7, no. 3 (2002): 9–12.

73 Antonsich, "*Geopolitica*," 275.

First World War had done pioneering work on regional political landscapes,[74] a higher degree of intellectual independence from day-to-day politics. But even where the relationship between politics and geography is complex rather than straightforward, it still does not mean that it is absent.

The influence of long waves of migration or endogenous demographic growth, or the religious and philosophical foundations of a "civilization" laid way back in ancient times, as well as of soil, climate, the atmosphere, and of *Gea* herself, ultimately all descended from Enlightenment theories of environmental and climatic influence on bodily characteristics, mentality, customs, culture, and economy, in short, on history. They all moved ahead from there in the tracks of the nineteenth-century geophilosophies of history examined in Chapter Four, all accepting the basic axioms of those philosophies. Politically, as Ó Tuathail has underlined, at least the most outspoken scholars of geopolitics all were "invariably imperialists of one sort or another."[75]

It was on similar grounds that they shared a Mediterranean vision as well, although the details of that vision would vary according to different national belongings and political or personal backgrounds. For example, the Swedish Kjellén, in his 1905 work *Stormakterna*, defined the Mediterranean as a European sea, although he did it from a more Northern European perspective. He shared Schuselka's earlier discussed view on the Mediterranean relapse into lethargy but seemed not to believe that it could easily recover and become again a driving force behind universal change. Instead, he characterized the Strait of Gibraltar as the European access point "to both the small and great Orients."[76] His formulation not only confirmed Ratzel's mixed contact and conflict zone theory but also underlined that "the classical Mediterranean is no longer in the foreground of history"[77] and that, consequently, the "historical importance" of Europe had shifted away from its Mediterranean origins, toward the Atlantic rims of the continent. It meant that from a "truer" European viewpoint, which by definition was always the most "modern" or "advanced" one, the Mediterranean had to be accessed through the Atlantic Ocean, besides, of course, France and Spain, which had both options, and Italy, which Kjellén saw relegated to a merely "internal" position.[78]

74 Andrea Baravelli, "André Sigfried. La geografia territoriale e gli spazi della politica," *Memoria e Ricerca* 72, no. 1 (2023): 129–42.

75 Ó Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics*, 22.

76 Rudolf Kjellén, *Stormakterna: konturer kring samtidens storpolitik* [1905] (Hugo Gebers förlag, 1912), 22.

77 Kjellén, *Stormakterna*, 85.

78 Kjellén, *Stormakterna*, 41.

In the descriptions of the time, however, the Strait of Gibraltar was not only a way in; it was also, or even more so, a way out. Among others, Theobald Fischer recounts in his 1908 book that

> around the time to which we usually refer to as the early modern period of history, seafarers who got their skills in the Mediterranean instruct the European peoples living on the ocean's rim and extend the space of action of the Mediterranean culture to the whole of Europe. By doing so, they create the conditions for the European dominance over a world already made wider by Italians.[79]

The same line of reasoning was taken up by German historian Paul Herre. The author confirmed Ratzel's typology of the Middle Seas but emphasized the "supreme importance" of the "European Mediterranean" compared to the Caribbean and Asiatic seas. In his opinion, its situation "between the three continents of the ancient world with their different races and peoples," together with the geological conformation of the southern European peninsulas and Asia Minor in the northern part, offered a unique prerequisite for state formation and cultural development. Archaeological research no longer allowed to regard the "Mediterranean World" as the only nucleus of all historical life. Nevertheless, "for us Europeans," the *Mittelmeerraum* was the "historical space of the richest and most varied developments." Given the European vanguard role, it also remained "the decisive stage of world-historical development."[80] This was due also to the critical contribution of Mediterranean knowledge and experience in seafaring, its mariners, and naval technology to European overseas expansion:

> The people of the Mediterranean offered a ground-breaking contribution to the formidable effort of the world's exploitation. They did this notwithstanding it moved their own space away from the focus of historical life. Obeying an instinctive impulse, these people put the achievements of their sea area at the disposal of universal human progress. This is a particularly strong and clear proof for the intrinsic force of history (…).[81]

During the decades that led to the First and Second World Wars, all those various tropes of geophilosophical Mediterranean mythology—a region uni-

79 Fischer, *Mittelmeerbilder,* 12.
80 Herre, *Weltgeschichte am Mittelmeer*, 3–4.
81 Paul Herre, *Der Kampf um die Herrschaft im Mittelmeer* (Quelle & Meyer, 1909), 77.

fied by climate, fauna, flora, trade connections, and urbanity; a zone of contrast and contact between the West and the East; a decisive passage in universal history; the original place of individualism and "reason" as a distinguishing feature of European political thought; the launch pad of universal history and Western civilization's world-wide expansion—condensed into a widely recognized geographical and geopolitical vision.

This was particularly true in France. During the 1920s and 1930s, Paul Valéry insisted that *Méditerrannée* rather than *Latinité* was "pre-Europe," that is, the basis of Europe as a driver of "civilization."[82] The writer and official of the Vichy regime, Paul Morand, characterized the Mediterranean as an "anti-desert: its entire history is a struggle of the sedentary against the nomads, of the house against the hut, of the deep-rooted vineyard against the hasty harvests of the riding hordes, of the Latins against the Slavs, of farmers against shepherds, custom against law, stone against sand."[83] Explicitly starting from there, André Siegfried stated in his *Vue general* of 1943:

> An impression is invariably imposed on whoever travels the Mediterranean, that of its unity, it is everywhere the same; nuances are less important than similarities. But this unity itself results from almost aggressive contrasts, sea and mountain, sea and desert, sea and ocean, either to the Syrian desert or to the Sahara, or to the Atlantic. M. Paul Morand very rightly called it the anti-desert. Its personality is essentially the result of these oppositions; it is expressed in the geographical structure, ordered by geology and climate, so characteristic that it serves as a typus in the classifications of climate scientists; it is made up of colours, perfumes, temperatures, radiations which distinguish this terrestrial zone from all the others, particularly from those which enclose it like a frame.[84]

Siegfried, whose slight anti-Atlanticist accent we will contextualize later, expressed agreement with one of Paul Valéry's *inspirations mediterranéennes* according to which the "construction of the human personality, the generation of an ideal of the most complete or the most perfect development of man, have been sketched out or carried out on our shores."[85] Similarly, Vidal had associated the comparison between the Alpes and the disproportionated

82 Lepenies, *Die Macht am Mittelmeer*, 278.
83 Paul Morand, *Méditerranée, mer des surprises* [1943] (Rocher, 1990), 21.
84 Siegfried, *Vue général*, 10–11.
85 Paul Valéry, *Variété III* (Gallimard, 1936), 264.

"colossuses" of the Himalaya with a "preference to cheerful proportion, to harmony of parts, to measure, in a word, to Europe, on Asia."[86]

Enveloped in this intellectual climate of European and Mediterranean geographical metaphorization, during his Algerian *séjour* of the late 1920s historian Fernand Braudel began to work on his project regarding the "Mediterranean World." What may have driven him and others toward the recognition of the influence of long-term structures in human history was the recurrent "desire for transcendence" of those European interwar intellectuals who rejected "the chaotic world of Nietzsche and Bergson" and for whom "structures provided a means of controlling, and making sense of, the enigmatic relationship between time and history."[87]

Braudel's "spatial and temporal cosmology together with his holistic and interdisciplinary approaches to the Mediterranean" owed something also to Charles-André Julien's *Histoire de l'Afrique du Nord*. The latter author was a fellow French historian in Algiers who reconstructed the historical unity of the "Berber civilization" in an area connected by "climate, soil, topography and natural resources." But differently from Julien's anti-colonial stances, Braudel displayed only a "low-key approach to the politics of empire."[88] As Manuel Borutta states in unequivocal terms, "young Braudel identified with France's colonial rule in North Africa."[89] He would complete his work on the Mediterranean during his time as a French prisoner of war in Germany in the early 1940s, defend it in 1947, and publish it in 1949.[90] It was thanks to the broad international recognition of Braudel's masterpiece that the idea of a "Mediterranean World" could trespass the narrower boundaries of intellectual and political debate to become a widely accepted popular commonplace.

As Paolo Giaccaria and Claudio Minca remind us, the influence "of French geography (in particular, the work of Paul Vidal de la Blache and Lucien Febvre) is explicitly laid out by Braudel in the opening pages of his opus magnum on the Mediterranean."[91] Vidal himself not only acknowledged Ratzel's influence on his own thought but, according to Guy Mercier, he also shared with his German colleague a common general vision of the relationship between

86 Vidal de La Blache, *La péninsule européenne,* 4.

87 John Strachan, "The Colonial Cosmology of Fernand Braudel," in *The French Colonial Mind: Violence, Military Encounters, and Colonialism*, vol. 1, ed. Martin Thomas (University of Nebraska Press, 2011), 75, 89.

88 Strachan, "The Colonial Cosmology," 75, 86, 88–90; the reference is to Charles-André Julien, *Histoire de l'Afrique du Nord* (Payot, 1931).

89 Borutta, "Braudel in Algier," 10.

90 Giuliana Gemelli, *Fernand Braudel e l'Europa universale* (Marsilio, 1990), 72.

91 Giaccaria and Minca, "The Mediterranean alternative," 349.

natural conditions and human history as well as of statehood.[92] Vidal's student and son-in-law, geographer Emmanuel de Martonne, was among Braudel's direct teachers.[93] But the line of scholarly ancestry was, of course, much longer. In keeping with our own findings, Thomas Schippers has drawn it between the German geographers of the early nineteenth century, such as Carl Ritter and Alexander von Humboldt, and later French geographers, such as Elisée Reclus "and even later historians like Fernand Braudel."[94] It therefore appears fair to conclude that, the originality of Braudel's historical subject of investigation notwithstanding, geographical and geopolitical writers as well as historians had long since anticipated the conceptual corpus of his *Mediterranée*. This anticipation was not limited to the socio-anthropological peculiarities of the "Mediterranean peoples," but likewise regarded the very idea of "civilization" in its twofold meaning of regional characteristics and world-historical process. That Braudel saw it as "a duty of Europe to westernize the Orient,"[95] inserts his thought in the same tradition.

As for regions, like his predecessors, Braudel also drew on what he saw as an inner causal nexus between environmental conditions and their impact on distinct groups of human society, which he called "civilizations" in the plural. If their slow unfolding and *longue durée* could be explained by means of geography, the reverse conclusion was that region-building was a material process of human interaction with geophysical and climatic conditions and the long-term cultural sediments that it had produced. As civilizations are "regions" or *espaces*, carving out such "worlds" like the Mediterranean one was a heuristic necessity in the study of human history.[96]

As for the universal dimension, Braudel underlined the centrality of the "Mediterranean World" for world history by stressing that "a larger Mediterranean surrounds, and therefore envelops, the Mediterranean proper, and serves as its sounding board."[97] This not only could be smoothly translated into a legitimization of European primacy over the confining swaths of African and Asian lands, but it also contained a geophilosophical backing of Western worldwide hegemony. Braudel's idea of *une plus grande Mediterranée* was

92 Guy Mercier, "La région et l'État selon Friedrich Ratzel et Paul Vidal de la Blache," *Annales de géographie* 583 (1995): 211–35.

93 Gemelli, *Fernand Braudel*, 45.

94 Thomas K. Schippers, "Nice to Think, Hard to Find," in *L'anthropologie de la Méditerranée*, ed. Dionigi Albera et al. (Maisonneuve et Larose, 2001), 725.

95 Borutta, "Braudel in Algier," 19.

96 Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, vol. 2, 773; on "regions" and *espaces*, see footnote 79 in Chapter Four.

97 Braudel, "Mère méditerranée," 10.

similar indeed to Herre's emphatic underlining of the Mediterranean's "instinctive" projection toward the oceans of the world. Like Herre and already Alexander von Humboldt, Braudel, too, highlighted Christopher Columbus and others in the role of Mediterranean torchbearers of Europe's and the West's universal mission.[98] According to this interpretation, the Mediterranean of the classical age had become the cradle of civilization at the confluence of the ancient East and the younger West. From the fifteenth century onward, it propagated "the penetrating influence of Western Mediterranean civilization" to ever more distant divisions of the Earth, giving rise to the "building of the modern world."[99] To the extent to which the Mediterranean could be seen as the launchpad of world history in a Hegelian sense, Wilhelm von Humboldt's "globalist" claim might also apply here: "World history is incomprehensible without a world government."[100]

Similar far-reaching assertions regarding the shape of Western global rule were probably beyond Braudel's intention, although he clearly stated that departing from its Mediterranean origins, Europe had become "the centre of world power."[101] What is sure, however, is that in the French historian's mind, the "Mediterranean World" contained an enormous world-historical potential. He considered it to be the original driver behind "the universality of Europe." Not only had it been "the place of acceleration of an *économie-monde* that has become a world economy," but it was also "the place of convergence and irradiation of an energy that is essentially of a cultural nature," and as such part of a "genealogy that coincides definitely with the *western civilization*."[102] At the very least, therefore, we can state that Braudel's narration advocated the enduring Western pre-eminence in the "Mediterranean World" of the twentieth century.

2 "Middle East," "Eurafrica," and the Cold War

In the changeable mix of European, British, and American geopolitical interests in the Mediterranean, continuities and breaking points are not always easy to discern. Nor is it always easy to separate from each other the intellectual efforts to further certain developments or interpret them. This is particu-

98 Braudel, *La Méditerranée*, vol. 1, 155; Braudel, "Mère méditerranée," 10.
99 Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, vol. 2, 835.
100 The quotation is taken from the front page of the 1837 edition of Hegel, *Vorlesungen*.
101 Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, vol. 2, 826.
102 Gemelli, *Fernand Braudel*, 200.

larly true for the years between 1914 and the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, when the macro pattern of forces became particularly fluid and at times turbulent. Up to the First World War, the overall accord between British and French power politics assured that most intra-European conflicts in the area were solved by diplomatic means. The Ottoman Empire and other European powers had no choice but to further their interests within the margins of the given order. The First World War and its results introduced new forces into the theater and swept older ones away. Then, in the 1930s and early 1940s, Italy and Germany tried to redefine the rules of the game in defying terms. However, even when the geopolitical design of Western European colonial powers and the Fascist Axis were clashing, the rhetoric of European unity and its metaphorical reference to the Mediterranean remained present on both sides.

In the interwar period, vis-à-vis the rise of American might and the political challenge represented by the Soviet Union in Western eyes, Pan-European unity became a prominent rhetorical point of reference indeed. Pan-Europe was hoped to prevent the much spoken-about "decline of the Occident" and uphold Europe's colonial and civilizational primacy against both eastern and transatlantic claims. Since the 1930s and during the war, Fascism, National Socialism, as well as influential forces in Nazi-occupied or likeminded countries that adhered to the same views competed with the Western Allies in interpreting each in their own way the theme of European unity. But the ideological divide between the camp that furthered a corporatist-fascistic order and the other one that privileged a democratic parliamentarian order encompassed ample grey zones. The shared intellectual and philosophical traditions that backed Europe's claims for primacy with regard to the "Mediterranean World" were one of those zones where the demarcation was blurred if existent at all.

Toward the end of the Second World War, when the future of a bipolar world was looming, the efforts to preserve an independent role for a united Western Europe as a powerful unified colonial empire intensified, but the possible contours of that empire remained unclear. One sign of change was a relatively new entry into the geographical nomenclature. It was called "Middle East." It coexisted with other denominations since around 1900, absorbing the older "Levant" and other names and "widening" the Mediterranean towards the east. Grounding in a British imperial perspective, during the Cold War the "Middle East" stood for an Anglo-American and oceanic, no longer francocentric, ultimately "Western" way of region-building and looking toward the Mediterranean so-called Other.

All these visions and actions remained centered around the Mediterranean Sea and therefore had the potential to alter, subvert, or even dissolve in some

meaningful way the traditional geohistorical contours of the "Mediterranean World." Both the remnants of British imperial nostalgia and the most ambitious French-led Eurafrican fantasies were demoted after the 1956 Suez Crisis when the American command over Western European affairs in and around the Mediterranean became indisputable, only to be further cemented in the aftermath of the 1973 Arab-Israeli war and the U.S.-Arab Petrodollar arrangements. The USA as a faraway power could have even been tempted to draft an entirely new script. Instead, the Americans soon found out about the convenience of the "Mediterranean World" for their own geopolitical design. The following pages try to describe how and why.

"Near East" and "Middle East"

In 1873, Vidal de la Blache claimed that the "precocious decadence of the Muslim states" had "raised on the shores of the Mediterranean one of the most serious problems of European balance. The future of the sea seems to be increasingly placed in the hands of the two families of people, Latin and Greco-Slavic, who occupy its European shores."[103] With the solution of the "oriental question" already in sight, Vidal's geopolitical mapping of the Mediterranean envisaged a renewed division between East and West along the historic fault lines of Christendom's schisma. Perhaps it was thought to replace the Christian-Muslim North-South divide, to which French colonialism was to offer the model solution. In hindsight, one may say that even the scenario of a Greek-Russian-led eastern Mediterranean badly predicted future developments. But what interests us here is that Vidal correctly gathered how, with the Ottoman decline in progress, Europe's colonial and imperial mind had to rethink, rename, and relocate its "Orients" once again.

Between the mid-nineteenth century and early-twentieth century, new denominations came to the fore that competed with each other in designating contiguous, overlapping, or even identical geographical divisions. Denominations and meanings also varied according to different national or personal perspectives and to changes in time. The two foremost expressions were "Near East" and "Middle East," over which definition battles have been fought without any clear outcome. Both terms signaled that Europe was leaving the Ottoman Empire mentally behind, even while it still persisted on the political map. But European ambitions extended much farther than the eastern borders of that agonizing political body. In previous centuries, the eastern coastline of the Mediterranean Sea had represented a European interface with con-

103 Vidal de La Blache, *La péninsule européenne*, 21.

tinental Asia, from Syria to China. This demarcation had been malleable to all kinds of exchange, but the Ottoman sovereignty behind it remained untouchable. As the nineteenth century came to a close, the hinterland of that coastline was mighty no more. Seen from Europe, the Mediterranean widened its gates to flood the eastern and southern directions. So it was time to substitute "Levant" with a wording that would open to this broader perspective.

In earlier English uses, "Near East" apparently included the Balkan and Anatolian heartlands and Arabian possessions of the Ottoman Empire. Once the Balkans were an "oriental question solved," in German and other continental-European traditions *Vorderer Orient* and *Naher Osten* retreated to the remaining area of Ottoman power outside Europe, while in English uses the "Middle East" tended to take this role.[104] After the First World War, *Naher Osten* was extended further east to include Iran and often even Afghanistan.[105] Egypt was also generally included. In Anglophone uses, again, "Middle East" followed the same trajectory of geographical broadening. Haushofer upheld the earlier English differentiation between "Near," "Middle," and "Far," returning to a "European Near East," although at that point the Ottoman Empire had ceased to exist. He did so to underline the borderless continuity between Europe and Asia and promote a "Eurasian continental policy" directed against the British sea power.[106]

After the Second World War, German-speaking authors continued to use alternatively *Naher Osten* and *Mittlerer Osten* for the same group of countries;[107] at times, older geographies, like that of the "Fertile Crescent," seeped into its geographical imaginary even without being made explicit. New geographies like the nationalist pan-"Arab World" opposed both denominations. On one hand, uses of "Near East," *Naher Osten* or *Vicino Oriente* persisted parallel to the "Middle East" occasionally even in Anglophone contexts; for instance, in 1958, a month after U.S. troops for the first time intervened in Lebanon, U.S. President Eisenhower gave a speech in which he "mentioned the Near East frequently, but not the Middle East."[108] On the other hand, that his wording bewildered so many journalists, who wondered what the difference might consist of, confirmed how in the Anglosphere at that point the

104 Henner Fürtig, "Was ist der Nahe Osten? Eine Einführung," *Informationen zur politischen Bildung* 317, no. 4 (2012): 4–7.

105 Edmund Jaroljmek, *Ich lebte in Nahost* (Deutscher Verlag für Jugend und Volk, 1942), 7.

106 Karl Haushofer, "Der Nahe Osten im Vorschatten eurasischer Festlandpolitik," *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* 16, no. 11 (1939): 782.

107 Reinhard Hüber, *Nahost ruft uns!* (Übersee-Verlag, 1954), 28–38; Arthur Cohn, *Unruheherd Mittlerer Osten* (Athena, 1953), 11.

108 Roderic H. Davison, "Where Is the Middle East?," *Foreign Affairs* 38, no. 4 (1960): 665.

meanings of the "Near East" had already been absorbed by the more familiar "Middle East."

Critics from European competitor nations and Arab nationalist backgrounds "have pointed to the British colonial and U.S. imperial interests behind lumping together this part of the world in the mind's eye and labelling it as the 'Middle East'."[109] A kind of Anglo-American "complicity" has been detected even in the creation of the expression itself. Texts by British general Thomas Edward Gordon and American navy captain Alfred Thayer Mahan are credited for being the earliest known sources. While Gordon's text of 1900 expressed concern about the independence of Persia and Afghanistan (from Russia, nota bene), Mahan underlined in 1902 the importance of securing the sea route between the Mediterranean and the "Far East," which, according to him, was a British geostrategic task. The author seemed to imply "that the Middle East embraced the territory between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean."[110] If before the First World War, according to a tripartite logic of empire, the Near East had been centered "on Turkey, the Middle East on India, the Far East on China," after the war "the Middle East burst onto the Mediterranean coast."[111] It was at this point when the geographical references of "Near" and "Middle" became indistinguishable.

The political landscape of the "Near/Middle East" was mostly a product of the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 and the Lausanne Treaty of 1923,[112] which marked the end of the Ottoman Empire and the stabilization of the southern borders of the Turkish nation-state and the Soviet Union. These changes put an unprecedented land bridge between the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf mostly under direct or indirect British control. As a victor of the Great War, the UK had successfully pushed back Ottoman, German, and Russian attempts at penetrating what they called their "sphere of interest." In Karl Loewy's perception, British predominance in the Mediterranean and even Britain's own survival were tightly linked to the steadfastness of its rule over the "Middle East," particularly Palestine: "England's task is not merely to secure the sea routes leading through the Mediterranean Sea to India. Control

109 Bilgin, "Securing the Mediterranean," 51.

110 Clayton R. Koppes, "Captain Mahan, General Gordon, and the Origins of the Term 'Middle East'," *Middle Eastern Studies* 12, no. 1 (1976): 95.

111 Davison, "Where Is the Middle East?," 668.

112 Thomas Seibert, *Machtkampf am Mittelmeer: Neue Kriege um Gas, Einfluss und Migration* (Links Verlag, 2021), 25; James L. Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East* (Oxford University Press, 2011), 184–95.

of the land route between the eastern Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf has become no less important for its future existence."[113]

Orientalist fantasies and military control apart, there was a regionalizing factor that undergirded the new geographical denomination with a strong trait of material unity. This factor was not the olive tree, the laurel, the lentisks, or the myrtles but the extraction of petroleum. During the interwar and war periods, German authors underlined how the "pretentions of the oil-dominating plutocracy," although driven away from Baku (while obtaining a Soviet renunciation of Iranian oil interests in return), had reshaped the whole political economy of the East that for Germans mostly remained "Near" and in English had become "Middle."[114] While German interests had been marginalized in the area after the war, in the 1930s American Standard Oil took a first foothold by developing oil fields in Saudi Arabia.[115] France also secured its "sphere of interest" in Lebanon and Syria, yet for the moment the "Middle East" remained a primarily British domain.

"Eurafrica" and "Atlantropa"

After the end of the Ottoman Empire, Vidal's subdivision of the "Mediterranean World" between the East and the West acquired new meanings. In the East, apart from the new Turkish nation state and the French control of Syria and Lebanon, British power was preponderant. That Great Britain was able to add the "Middle East" to its global domain could give it some new confidence at a time when, on the other hand, it had ended the war as a major debtor and lost part of its previous industrial vigour. It was the Western, "Latin," part of the "Mediterranean World" where Europe's new dilemmas were more vividly reflected and where continental Europe focused to find ways out. The USA and the Soviet Union had emerged as new poles in world politics, and the "Middle East" was one way for Great Britain to stem what it considered its main adversary, the Soviet Union. But the other European colonial empires and, even more so, the defeated German and Habsburg successor states, while opposing the USSR, sensed the strength of the new trans-Atlantic powerhouse as well. This was the point where the Mediterranean, particularly its western part, became a pivot for Pan-European unification efforts.

113 Karl Loewy, "Englands militärische Stellung im Mittelmeer," *Jüdische Revue* 2, no. 6 (1937): 327.

114 Iwan Kirchner, *Der Nahe Osten: Der Kampf um Vorderasien und Ägypten vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart* (Rohrer, 1943), 706.

115 Toby Craig Jones, "America, Oil, and War in the Middle East," *The Journal of American History* 99, no. 1 (2012): 208.

The name of these efforts was *Eurafrica*. As the careful reconstruction by Peo Hansen and Stefan Jonsson has brought to our attention, this somehow "forgotten" colonial project was promoted from the interwar years onward up to the early 1960s by a variety of states as well as economic and political forces. The latter ranged from fascists to liberals and Christian democrats to socialists. "Eurafrica entailed extraction of raw materials, large-scale settlement of white Europeans in Africa and the ascendence of a third economic, political, cultural and, ultimately, imperial entity — Eurafrica — balancing the Americas (the United States) and Eurasia (the Soviet Union)." European integration of the space between the Atlantic, the Soviet borders, and down into the Mediterranean was needed because "no single European state owned the resources to organize and finance the required settlements. Therefore, European cooperation was necessary."[116] French-German complementarity was at the very core of the project, which other European nations were welcome to join. But to cut out its "fair share" from the global distribution of wealth and power, as a minimum Europe had to unite German finance capital and industrial prowess with the military might, raw materials, and workforce of the French colonial empire.

"Europe's world hegemony is irrevocably lost," stated Count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, a Czechoslovakian citizen, in his 1923 booklet *Paneuropa*, "but not yet its independence, not yet its colonial empire, not yet its culture, not yet its future." He added that in order "to correctly assess the future prospects of Pan-Europe, its colonies must also be considered." He went on declaring: "Through uniform organization and rational development of its African colonial empire, (…) Pan-Europe could produce all the raw materials and food it needs itself and thus become economically independent."[117] The Pan-European project was a Eurafrican project from the beginning. In 1929 the same author would lay out in greater detail his plans for Africa, "Europe's plantation."[118]

In particular for Germany, European unification with the aim of a "uniform organization" of "our colonies" was a way to regain access to overseas resources, after the bitter loss of colonies imposed on the country by the victors of the Great War. Important German liberal and centrist-Catholic politicians, bankers, and industrialists joined Coudenhove-Kalergi's movement. In 1928, industrialist Richard Heilner, in a private presentation, complained about the

116 Peo Hansen and Stefan Jonsson, *Eurafrica: The Untold History of European Integration and Colonialism* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 58, 60.

117 Richard N. Coudenhove-Kalergi, *Pan-Europa* [1923] (Pan-Europa Verlag, 1982), 24, 37–38.

118 Richard N. Coudenhove-Kalergi, "Afrika," *Paneuropa* 5, no. 2 (1929): 3–18.

dire economic situation that led to the need to "reduce wages and salaries and all government spending to a minimum" in order to keep export prices at a competitive level. However, since "we have seen the huge number of socialist votes and three million communist votes here," that race to the bottom had political limits. Against this backdrop, "the creation of Paneuropa is an absolute necessity" because it would allow the creation of a "huge domestic market," while the colonies would guarantee European self-sufficiency in the supply of wheat and raw materials, also moderating the input costs of capital goods.[119]

"Do they want Paneuropa in France, in other countries?", Heilner wondered, only to answer his rhetorical question by reassuring his listeners that "especially in France there are countless people who are of the same opinion that unification is an absolute necessity."[120] This was perhaps an exaggeration of quantity and at the same time an understatement of quality, as also in France, like in Germany, people who counted rather than countless people supported the Pan-European idea. Indeed, the Pan-European movement had important supporters among the French economic and political elite. The most influential was no one less than statesman Aristide Briand, who in 1929 proposed a "Regime of European Federal Union." He was nominated the honorary president of Coudenhove-Kalergi's Paneuropa Union, which underlined: "As long as European states possess extra-European colonies, the pan-European movement demands their joint development [*Erschließung*] on the basis of economic equality and their consolidation as the base of pan-Europe's raw materials."[121]

But *Paneuropa* was not alone. In 1932, the Bavarian engineer Herman Sörgel, predicting the exhaustion of coal and oil reserves, proposed to exploit the energy potential of hydropower in the Mediterranean through a dam across the straits.[122] His plans also foresaw irrigation projects in the Sahara, the lowering of the Mediterranean's sea level in favor of land reclamation, and eventually land bridges to Africa to unite the new continent, "Atlantropa." Given the gigantic purpose of his "scientifically and technologically based economic planning," we might say that Sörgel brought Chevalier's ideas to an entirely

119 [Richard Heilner] *Die Gefahren der europäischen Wirtschaftslage und deren Abwendung durch den wirtschaftlichen Zusammenschluss: Protokoll der Besprechung am 22. September 1928 im Hause Heilner zu Stuttgart*, typewritten (1928), 9–10, 14–15.

120 [Heilner] *Die Gefahren*, 11.

121 [Aristide Briand and Richard N. Coudenhove-Kalergi], *Paneuropaunion* (Paneuropa-Verlag, 1928), 8.

122 Herman Sörgel, *Atlantropa* (Piloty & Loehle, 1932).

new scale.[123] Certainly his projects resonated with the French Saint-Simonian technocratic tradition, as Eirik Labonne's post-war plans would show.

Sörgel's map of Eurafrican unity included Great Britain and its African colonial possessions, differently from Coudenhove-Kalergi's design. However, the exclusion demonstrated by the Eurafricanists was not motivated by geopolitical prejudices, according to which only "land powers have tried to organize Europe. Only plans originating from the mainland have a possibility to become true today."[124] Rather, as Heilner made clear, was it for the Pan-Europeans, they would welcome Britain to the club but it was the British hesitations and "regards for their dominions" that prevented the inclusion.[125] In his 1934 PhD dissertation on *Panbritannien*, a German author argued that Great Britain's world empire was "part of the more general, worldwide, political and economic endeavour of Europeanism." The prevalence of "coloured races" in its empire notwithstanding, the country had preserved the "purity of the British race." It was therefore in the perfect condition, and even had a duty, to help avoid "the 'dethronement of Europe' in world politics and world economy."[126]

In Germany, such openness toward British inclusion in African affairs ended after 1935, when Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia provoked the sanctions of the League of Nations, which Italy quit in 1937, instead proclaiming the Italian Empire. As a consequence of Italy's tensions with Britain and France over Africa, and of the coordinated German-Italian intervention in the Spanish Civil War, the formerly strained relationship between Italy and Nazi Germany improved rapidly, culminating in 1938–39 with the settlement of the bilateral conflicts around Austria and South Tyrol. As Edmund Schopen glossed, the Mediterranean now had become the stage of a dispute with worldwide consequences because, on the one hand, it represented an indispensable piece of west-east connectivity on the map of the British Empire, while, on the other hand, it was indispensable for Italy's north-south development of force. With both powers experiencing "a vital need to dominate the Mediterranean strategically," a clash of interests was unavoidable, and—if seen from a German perspective—any British-Pan-European integration

123 Quotation drawn from Herman Sörgel, "Was ist Atlantropa?," *Atlantropa-Mitteilungen* 1, no. 1–2 (1946): 1.

124 Karl-Christian Loesch, *Paneuropa, Völker und Staaten: Eine Untersuchung der geopolitischen Grundlagen* (Deutscher Schutzbund-Verlag, 1928), 38.

125 [Heilner,] *Die Gefahren*, 15–16.

126 Heribert Sartorius, *Panbritannien und Paneuropa: ein kritischer Vergleich* (H & J. Lechte, 1934), 204, 207, 209 .

and cooperation in Africa became unrealistic.[127] German Eurafricanists now favored Italy's full control over the Mediterranean "'junction zone' (*zona di saldatura*) between the two continents." The term "*Eurafrica* circulated widely in Italy in the 1930s and 1940s and became part of the rhetoric of the regime as well."[128]

The best-known representative of this strand of thought was the Africanist Paolo Orsini di Camerota, who published his book *Eurafrica* in 1934,[129] in which he favored "the resettlement of large numbers of unemployed lower-class Italians to Libya and other parts of North Africa, as well as Ethiopia and Eritrea."[130] Another was Giuseppe de Michelis, president of the International Institute of Agriculture in Rome, delegate to the League of Nations, and Italian representative at the International Labour Organization (ILO) at Geneve. In the early 1930s, when the ILO was in search of "possible solutions to unemployment in Europe," the idea of a mass resettlement of European unemployed workers to Africa gained traction, thanks to the contributions of Eugène Guernier and George Valois.[131] In line with their arguments, and those of the former French minister of the colonies, "member of the Pan-European organization" and "ardent colonial ideologue" Albert Sarraut,[132] de Michelis saw in Africa a "disposal of European demographic and professional exuberance." As a representative of the ILO, he felt obliged to underline that a united Europe should not "oppress, but liberate from slavery and barbarism, and raise to the highest levels of civilization" the African population, at least in the "vast regions" reserved for it.[133] This was one of the rarer moments when Eurafricanists spoke about (let alone with or at least at) Africans.

Since the early 1920s, the leader of Pan-Europe, Coudenhove-Kalergi, had flattered the fascist leadership in Rome to gain its support, because "he not only considered Italian fascism to be compatible with 'Paneuropa', but even considered it to be exemplary."[134] In 1930, he wrote approvingly that Mussoli-

127 Edmund Schopen, *Weltentscheidung im Mittelmeer* (Goldmann, 1937), 75–76.

128 Antonsich, "Geopolitica," 269.

129 Paolo Orsini di Camerota, *Eurafrica: L'Africa per l'Europa, l'Europa per l'Africa* (Paolo Cremonese, 1934).

130 Hansen and Jonsson, *Eurafrica*, 37.

131 Hansen and Jonsson, *Eurafrica*, 53; Georges Valois, *L'Afrique, chantier de l'Europe* (Librairie Valois, 1931); Eugène Guernier, *L'Afrique: Champ d'expansion de l'Europe* (Armand Colin, 1933).

132 Hansen and Jonsson, *Eurafrica*, 51–52.

133 Giuseppe de Michelis, *La corporazione nel mondo* (Bompiani, 1934), 233.

134 Michael Thöndl, "Richard Nikolaus Graf Coudenhove-Kalergi, die 'Paneuropa-Union' und der Faschismus 1923–1938," *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 98 (2018): 330.

ni's confidant Asvero Gravelli was leading "the fascist wing of the Pan-Europe Movement."[135] But the Italian government remained dismissive as long as Mussolini saw in "Paneuropa" a French-inspired maneuver aimed at marginalizing Italy. However, when in 1932 the Italian Royal Academy organized an international congress in Rome to talk about "Europe," the lecture of German diplomat and Pan-Europeanist Albrecht Mendelssohn Bartholdy, who called for European cooperation in the African colonies, was well received.[136] After Hitler came to power in 1933, Mussolini hoped improving French-Italian cooperation would counterbalance Germany's influence, given the violent feuds between fascists and nazis in South Tyrol and Austria. Now Coudenhove's quest for a dialogue was heard, and the leader of *Paneuropa* was received by the Duce.

Like Mussolini, "Coudenhove-Kalergi consistently supported Austria's independence and supported the authoritarian state of the governments of Engelbert Dollfuss and Kurt von Schuschnigg."[137] But in 1938 he had to flee Austria to escape arrest by the prevailing National Socialists. Meanwhile, however, against the backdrop of the new international situation, Hitler and Mussolini were on the verge of settling their quarrels and establishing their Pact of Steel. From now on it was rather the authors of *Geopolitik* who spoke with the Italians about Eurafrica. In 1938, Haushofer participated as

> one of more than sixty panellists at the eighth Volta Congress focused on Africa. This congress aimed to bring together scholars and politicians involved in African affairs, but it was not merely to be a gathering of Africanists and colonial officials. Rather, the congress would represent a sort of geopolitical dialogue. Its real subject was the concept of "Eurafrica" (i.e., the economic, demographic, and, hence, political complementarity of Europe and Africa). Undoubtedly, the reason behind the Italian Royal Academy's announcement of such an event was the constitution of the fascist empire, with the conquest of Ethiopia and its entrenchment within Italian East Africa, but the Volta Congress of 1938 was also profoundly connected to that of 1932, which had been devoted to the theme of Europe.[138]

Many speakers presented the Italian colonial project as an alternative to the greedy approach practiced by "plutocratic" France and Great Britain. They

135 Richard N. Coudenhove-Kalergi, "Antieuropa," *Paneuropa* 6, no. 3 (1930): 95.
136 Hansen and Jonsson, *Eurafrica*, 55.
137 Thöndl, "Richard Nikolaus Graf Coudenhove-Kalergi," 329.
138 Bassoni, "Karl Haushofer," 436.

lauded the idea of mass resettlement and supported "the colonial claims of both Italy and Germany." After the Versailles Treaties, Germany had continued to seek a revision of its forced loss of colonies. At the Rome congress, even "some British panellists agreed with the necessity of Germany's return to Africa."[139] The development of "unexploited hydrodynamic power in the Mediterranean region and the Congo Basin" was one of the ideas entertained by German industrialists.[140] The combination of Italian redeployment of a workforce and German capital investment was among the core elements of the discussion.

For all the diplomatic and ideological recognition that Nazi Germany reserved to its Axis partner's Mediterranean and African appetites, "Eurafrica" did not lose its French-German imprint. This was true, in particular, during the Second World War, when "various plans" are reported to have emerged to "integrate Vichy France's African territories into the Third Reich."[141] Whatever this "integration" might have meant in concrete terms, the German interest in French Africa was about the procurement of raw materials and the export of capital and goods, as it always would be from a German point of view. But time was too short for practical consequences, also because Hitler had other "living spaces" to think of. On the military side, Admiral Erich Raeder's suggestion to seek authorization from Pétain to deploy huge German naval forces to North Africa and take military action in the Mediterranean was dismissed by the Führer.[142]

The African continent "was of course equally important for de Gaulle's Free France and its exiled representatives, many of whom found refuge in Africa with those few colonial administrations that remained loyal to the republic."[143] The French colonies were a resource-rich logistic hinterland for Free France and later the French Committee of National Liberation. The Brazzaville Conference of February 1944, attended by Charles de Gaulle, René Pleven, and other leaders of democratic France, conferred to Africa more than just a symbolic role for French post-war prospects. The Brazzaville declaration pledged that the inhabitants of French colonies would be granted equal political rights. In doing so, it underlined that democratic France was intent to keep the empire. And the act that followed suit made clear what this meant: "The CFLN, aware of the need for rather profound changes, took an ordinance

139 Bassoni, "Karl Haushofer," 436, 438.

140 [Anonymous], "Hitler-Wirtschaft: Atlantropa, vormals Eurafrika," *Die Zeitung*, March 27, 1942, 11.

141 Hansen and Jonsson, *Eurafrica*, 66.

142 Ravenel, *Méditerranée*, 38.

143 Hansen and Jonsson, *Eurafrica*, 66–67.

in March 1944, which granted full French citizenship, including the right to vote, to … 60,000 French Muslims."[144]

Since the 1920s, a French-dominated symbol of Eurafrican "unity" and its characteristic expressions of cosmopolitan colonialism was the International Zone of Tangier. The area, nominally under the Moroccan Sultan's reign, was put under the joined administration of European powers to safeguard British security interests on the coast opposite to Gibraltar.[145] The joined administration was legitimized by the League of Nations. In the mid-1930s, its legislative body comprised four French, four Spanish, three British, three Italian, one Belgian, one Dutch, one Portuguese, and one American representatives; those 18 delegates represented the 16% Christian inhabitants, whereas the vast majority of Muslim (60%) and Jewish (24%) inhabitants were represented by just six and three delegates, respectively; a *Tribunal Mixte* dispensed justice in the name of the *Empire Cherifien*. Thanks to the cosmopolitan cultural atmosphere and the liberal economic and fiscal regulations, until the end of the international status in 1956 the Christian—mainly European—population almost quadrupled. Among them were many humble traders, shopkeepers, contractors, artisans, and auxiliary workers from southern Italy, Spain, and Portugal, who intermingled and intermarried, thus creating family ramifications with Europe and Latin America. Vis-à-vis the native population, however, this cosmopolitan society nonetheless formed a colonial in-group, the leadership of which kept its internal national distinctions alive. In the 1930s, German journalist Margret Boveri reserved acerbic comments for the experiment of a "European condominium" in Africa, concluding that in "Tangier everyone does what they please" and that "every nationality [seeks] to affirm their prestige even in the tiniest affair," while the "interests of the community of Tangier are only given last thought, if at all."[146]

As Hansen and Jonsson write, "Germany's Eurafrican scheme was to be built in close collaboration with fascist Italy and the French Vichy Republic."[147] From a practical point of view, until late 1942, when Pétain's France lost its grip on Africa and the Mediterranean, little could be done. Nonetheless, even afterward the advantages of independence from both America and Eurasia, which was the core idea of Eurafrica, remained a terrain of French-German theoretical convergency. In 1943, Haushofer noted that the U.S. penetration

144 Ravenel, *Méditerranée*, 40.

145 Mohr, "Politische Probleme," 23.

146 Boveri, *Das Weltgeschehen am Mittelmeer*, 78–79; and ASDMAE, Tangeri parte vecchia, busta 1, Famiglia Morsello; busta 2, f. Croce Rodriguez successione; f Mayer Alkaim successione; f Petri Achille successione.

147 Hansen and Jonsson, *Eurafrica*, 67.

of African transport and communication systems was well advanced, which gave him "the impression of being geared towards later extraction of raw materials and inheritance from French, Italian and British colonial methods."[148] In the same year, André Siegfried wrote that "Ford seems to rise up against Ulysses" and added that to contrast the American way of interpreting Western civilization, Europe should return to its own Mediterranean traditions of "contact" with Africa and Asia, and to its own understanding of the contribution that "the cooperation of the East and of the West [had given] to the building of a human civilization."[149] Siegfried's preoccupation seemed to speak to the particular geopolitical situation of Vichy France, to the "sanitized portrait" of which he would contribute after the war.[150] It also cultivated the idea of the Mediterranean and Eurafrica as a kind of European third way or "alternative modernity" if compared to the hegemonic Anglo-American economic and cultural model, which with different accents would be reproposed in future works by various authors.[151] This idea would remain a terrain of French-German accord also after the war.

During the war, German judgment regarding French efforts of civilization on the southern edge of the "Mediterranean World" fell back on the representations inherited from the long German geographical tradition since Büsching, and the geophilosophical one since Zeune, Krause, and Hegel. Wherefore, on the land between the Mediterranean sea of water and the Saharan sea of sand, "civilized," "accultured," and "modern" Europe was in both contact and conflict with a double-faced, ambiguous Other: The nomadic and Semitic "Orient." Here, Europe could look down upon "black" or "colored" peoples. North Africa still represented that kind of peninsula between sea and desert where Europe confronted both. On his visit to Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria, Colin Ross, the famed Austrian traveler, best-selling author, filmmaker, and friend of Nazi youth leader Baldur von Schierach, reported:

> Yesterday in Ain Sefra we were still in Africa, today in Perrégaux we are already in Europe. That is a Saharan oasis: strange, Arabic, oriental, the station a fortress, the place itself with a large native town, with barracks in the Moorish style and – against the last houses in burning red gold rolling like surf – the sea

148 Karl Haushofer, "Eurafrikas Atlantikfront," *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* 20, no. 7 (1943): 251.
149 Siegfried, *Vue général*, 1, 12.
150 Kim Munholland, "Wartime France: Remembering Vichy," *French Historical Studies*, 18, no. 3 (1994): 804.
151 Albert Camus, *L'homme révolté* (Gallimard, 1951), 308; Franco Cassano, *Il pensiero meridiano* (Laterza, 2003); Ian Chambers, *Mediterranean Crossings: The Politics of an Interrupted Modernity* (Duke University Press 2008), 15, 110.

> of dunes, Africa. But this is Europe, France, I almost was about to say Germany, so homely the landscape and the city seemed to me.[152]

Not long after Ross's travel to the French colonies in the winter of 1941–42, the Allied "Operation Torch" would strap North Africa away from Petain's hands. Yet French colonialism, which in Ross's eyes had "undoubtedly achieved great things in Africa," would live on for a while under the restored democratic system.[153]

The use of "Eurafrica" in political and academic discourse survived the end of the war almost seamlessly. However, chronological continuity does not imply absence of change in text and context. For a rough approximation, it may be useful to distinguish four different phases by their prevalent trait, the first two of which we have already spoken about: Eurafrica's invention and promotion mainly in the German-French area in 1923–38 and its geopolitical projection by the European Axis partners and Vichy France in 1939–43. These phases were followed by two others: the British-French understanding regarding Eurafrica's usefulness for independent imperial self-preservation in 1944–49 and, finally, the European Coal and Steel Community's and the European Economic Community's collective defence of European colonialism in Africa in 1950–62.

As we will see in the next section, although Great Britain's domestic economy had suffered from the war, in 1944–45 in the Mediterranean and the "Middle East" the geopolitical position of the British Empire seemed strengthened thanks to its military successes. The Labour cabinet under Clement Atlee, which took over in 1945, and especially its Foreign Affairs Secretary Ernest Bevin, were convinced that the survival of the "greatest collection of free nations" hinged on the colonial empire's preservation. Around the Mediterranean, Bevin backed the British military intervention in Greece and took measures to secure the country's positions in Malta, Cyprus, Palestine, and the Suez Canal Zone, supporting Italy's attempts to avert its complete expulsion from Libya in the hope to gain a British foothold there. It was in this context that Bevin cultivated the design of a "Third World Power," which, under British-French direction, would lead Europe on a third way independent from Soviet and American command.[154]

In 1946, a German disciple of Sörgel's observed with satisfaction that "England is drawing inwardly closer to continental Europe," maintaining that this

152 Colin Ross, "Algerische Impressionen," *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* 20, no. 2 (1943): 96.
153 Ross, "Algerische Impressionen," 99.
154 Hansen and Jonsson, *Eurafrica*, 76–83.

"development is to be welcomed as it will facilitate the resolution of African issues that will become necessary in the future."[155] Until 1949, Great Britain not only strongly engaged in the European federal movement but also considered the Eurafrican project of colonial cooperation a priority of its foreign policy, issuing proposals like the creation of an African Development Council of all European colonial powers besides Spain, plus South Africa. But in 1949, "All of a sudden, Britain opted out of the European bloc and instead decided that its fortunes would be better served by an Atlantic alliance and trade with the Commonwealth and Empire."[156]

Eurafrica's last period began with the Schuman Plan of 1950, inspired by Jean Monnet. A passage in the Plan called for a contribution to the development of the African continent. According to Wolf Lepenies, it "expressed France's desire to let its own colonies participate in the advantages of European unification" and continued the discourse on "Eurafrica."[157] The most important practical consequence of the Schuman Plan, the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), was set up in April 1951. In article 79 it extended the preferential dispositions of the treaty to extra-European territories under the jurisdiction of its member states, giving, for example, German and Italian coal, iron, and steel producers access to African markets and to iron ore and other resources. Italy, by successfully negotiating the common labor market in coal mines and steelworks, hoped to replace the African workforce with an Italian workforce in France and Benelux. These were examples for what the socialist politician François Mitterrand meant when writing that "Europe itself can do nothing without France" and that, since France could do little without Africa, European integration was hardly conceivable without Eurafrica.[158]

After uniting the *Colonies françaises d'Afrique* (CFA) in 1945 under a Paris-controlled monetary union with a separate CFA franc, aimed at "regaining control of its colonies," France sought solutions to develop infrastructure, mining, agriculture, and industrialization across the Eurafrican part of the French Union.[159] This entity, created in 1946 as a replacement for the *Empire français*, was envisioned as stretching "from the Congo to the Rhine."[160] The

155 Christian Paul, "Weg von der Raubtierpolitik zu einer organisierten Produktionspolitik," *Atlantropa-Mitteilungen* 4 (1946): 3.

156 Hansen and Jonsson, *Eurafrica*, 90.

157 Lepenies, *Die Macht am Mittelmeer*, 323.

158 François Mitterrand, *Aux Frontières de l'Union Française* (Paris: Julliard, 1953), 24–25, quoted from Hansen and Jonsson, *Eurafrica*, 104; see also 121–23.

159 Fanny Pigeaud and Ndongo Samba Sylla, *Africa's Last Colonial Currency: The CFA Franc Story* (London: Pluto Press, 2021), 13.

160 Hansen and Jonsson, *Eurafrica*, 97–98.

most ambitious plan was proposed in the late 1940s by a cousin-in-law of Paul Morand, the high-ranking colonial officer and diplomat Eirik Labonne.[161] It seemed to reverberate the Saint-Simonian tradition of Michel Chevalier and the technical grandiosity of Herman Sörgel but lent also from the integrated development design of the U.S. Tennessee Valley Authority and coeval growth pole theorists like François Perroux.[162] It foresaw special areas "suitably located for mining, processing, manufacturing or general economic growth and simultaneously of strategic importance in an emerging Cold War context."[163] The plan was supported by the governmental Bureau d'Organisation des Ensembles Industriels Africaines, headed by Louis Armand. Its weakest point was the huge amount of investment needed, which exceeded normal French capacities of capital mobilization. Therefore, it foresaw the possibility of involving European foreign—which mainly meant German—investment, a provision that situated the French plans at the core of Eurafrica in the process of European integration.

During the negotiations for the Common Market, Belgium joined France in requiring the association of their African colonial territories and joint European investments in African infrastructure. In the Netherlands and Germany, critical voices were heard that pointed out the inconvenience that other member states should shoulder costs that would yield benefits mostly for the colonial powers.[164] The "mixed economy approach" behind the French plans, with its heavy involvement of dirigiste planning and state-owned enterprise,[165] was anathema to German ordo-liberals or Dutch free traders. But German foreign minister Heinrich von Brentano, in a letter to chancellor Adenauer, reaffirmed the German interest in the common *Erschließung* of the French-Belgian African territories. The upper echelons of German industry and banking were

161 Veronique Pétreau, "Les Amis de Lury rendent hommage à Eirick Labonne, ambassadeur de France mort il y a 50 ans," *Le Berry républicain*, 14.08.2021, accessed June 15, 2023, https://www.leberry.fr/lury-sur-arnon-18120/loisirs/les-amis-de-lury-rendent-hommage-a-eirick-labonne-ambassadeur-de-france-mort-il-y-a-50-ans_13997562/.

162 Eirik Labonne, *Politique industrielle et stratégique de l'Union française: Les Z.O.I.A. zones d'organisation industrielle et stratégique africaine* (Revue militaire d'information, 1955); Jean-Michel De Lattre, "Les grands ensembles africains: aspects économiques et financiers de l'industrie saharienne," *Politique étrangère* 20, no. 5 (1955): 541–74; François Perroux, "Note sur la notion Pôle de croissance," *Economie appliquée* 1–2 (1955): 307–20.

163 Hansen and Jonsson, *Eurafrica*, 98–99.

164 Hansen and Jonsson, *Eurafrica*, 171–77.

165 De Lattre, "Les grands ensembles africains," 546–51.

eager indeed to participate, perhaps not just to make an immediate profit but also, as some observers of the time suspected, "to recuperate colonial influence."[166]

Alongside the railroads, crane towers, and smokestacks, which for the most part remained futurist sketches and signs on a map, the free zone of Tangier was an ideal and indeed idealized, but also real and concrete, symbol of the Eurafrican project. Its "cosmopolitan aura"[167] was probably the most telling symptom of its pivotal role, both material and symbolic, in the framework of the Western (neo-)colonial relationship with North Africa. In the immediate aftermath of World War II, the city was used as a bargaining chip in Mediterranean affairs. France considered "the dissolution of Italy as a Mediterranean power indispensable for its own security in the Western Mediterranean." It favored not only Italy's loss of the Libyan colony but also its withdrawal from the 1896 treaty regarding Italian residents in Tunis and possibly their repatriation. To compensate, or console, the Italians, in 1947 it offered Italy to re-enter the international administration of Tangier.[168] But only nine years later, France itself had to give up on the Moroccan colony. With the colonial order Tangier lost its "unique extra-territorial legal status." Its cosmopolitanism was no more, until new attempts in a similar direction were undertaken, after 1999, within the "Euro-Mediterranean" framework.[169]

If Tangier was a trial run of Eurafrica, the Eurafrican idea as such laid bare some deeper strands of geopolitical convergency between the fascist European Axis powers and Vichy France, on the one hand, and the democratic Pan-European and federalist movements of both the pre- and post-war years, on the other. There were no two Eurafricas, one of the totalitarian Axis and another of the democratic Allies. There was but one Eurafrica of the assorted European colonialists. The convergency among them was not occasional or circumstantial but conceptual and ideological.

The first strand of continuity was geopolitical. Eurafrica had started as a spatialized idea related to Pan-Europe, from where it was picked up by geopolitics, together with Eurasia. Following the tides of political and military development, Haushofer had given the idea of Eurasia different political meanings. Until 1939, he envisaged the prospects of "a German-Russian settlement" and a "Japanese-Russian understanding" that could lead to a coopera-

166 Hansen and Jonsson, *Eurafrica*, 172–73.

167 Clancy-Smith and Smith, *The Modern Middle East*, 74.

168 Luigi Vittorio Ferraris, ed., *Manuale della politica estera italiana* (Laterza, 1998), 66–67.

169 Luiza Białasiewicz, "Tangier, Mobile City: Re-making Borders in the Straits of Gibraltar," in *Borderities and the Politics of Contemporary Mobile Borders*, ed. by Anne-Laure Amilhat Szary and Frederic Girault (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 225–29.

tive "Eurasian continental policy" of common interest.[170] In summer 1941, the war against the Soviet Union revealed to him "the greatest task of geopolitics," which consisted in "shaping Eurasia and Eurafrica into reality, into positive creative values," meaning that both Eurasia and Eurafrica should be spaces shaped by European dominance rather than egalitarian cooperation.[171] As Haushofer's long-term associate Otto Maull wrote in 1951, Europe was a peripheric peninsula of Eurasia and per se had little political meaning; its separation line with Asia had no geographical foundations, and it could only be established by the "cultural-historical unity" of Europe itself and its political will—again, a geopolitical consignment (*Aufgabe*).[172] Two years later, French general and Gaullist politician Joseph de Monsabert wrote that without "Africa, Europe cannot breath and cannot act." This was a more graphic way of saying that Africa was Europe's living space. He then added that "there no longer are three separate and distinct continents — Europe, Asia and Africa. *There are only Eurasia and Eurafrica*."[173]

If the concrete political meaning and geographical coordinates of "Eurafrica" and "Eurasia" were to a certain extent changeable, the underlying concept was not. It remained firmly geopolitical. During the war, German writers defended the universal scientific value of *Geopolitik* against adversaries who were disparaging it for being an amateurish pretext for justifying German expansionism. How was it, they retorted, that "sphere of interest" and "sphere of influence," used among other instances in the German debate around Friedrich Naumann's *Mitteleuropa*, had been applied to the "Middle East" and generally accepted in the Anglo-American literature?[174] And regarding "vital interest," used in the USA first to legitimize the Panama Canal Zone and then to control the land and sea bridges between it and its own borders, what more proper German translation could exist other than *Lebensraum*?[175] "Washington does not want to accept that both the doctrine of Monroe and the strategy

170 Haushofer, "Der Nahe Osten," 782.

171 Haushofer, "Die größte Aufgabe," 369.

172 Otto Maull, "Europa: Nicht Erdteil, sondern Aufgabe," *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* 22, no. 11 (1951): 665–70.

173 General [Joseph] de Monsabert, "North Africa in Atlantic Strategy," *Foreign Affairs* 31, no. 3 (1953): 418–26; quote taken from Hansen and Jonsson, *Eurafrica*, 201–202, emphasis in original.

174 Sydney Morrell, *Spheres of Influence: A Study in Power Politics, 1939–1946* (Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1946); see also Patricia Chiantera-Stutte, "The State as a 'form of life' and the space as Leistungsraum: the reception of Ratzel in the First and Second World Wars," *Geographica Helvetica* 78 (2023): 29–39.

175 Rudolf Westermann, "Nomenklatur amerikanischer Geopolitik," *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* 21, no. 1 (1944): 15–16.

of the USA around the Panama Canal and the Caribbean Sea as well as the transport policy of the semi-public Pan American Airways and Roosevelt's entire hemisphere policy can be described as American geopolitics."[176]

The post-war debate around Eurafrica seemed to vindicate such criticisms. When the leader of the European Union of Federalists, Hendrik Brugmans, claimed that Europe would urgently need Africa as its "living space," he was cautious enough to hastily add "if you will forgive the expression," but evidently, he was unable to find a more fitting one. British Foreign Secretary of the Labour cabinet, Ernest Bevin, instead openly invoked the "three great Monroes," meaning the Western Hemisphere of the original Monroe Doctrine plus Eurasia and Eurafrica.[177] These "three Monroes" (plus an Austral-Oceanic one) already could be read out of the tables and maps that Alois Fischer had drawn in 1925 to calculate the geo-economic and demographic viability of the great global "living spaces."[178]

Settler-colonialism and racism were two other main features that characterized all four periods and political areas of the Eurafrican discourse. Africa was "looked at as a provider of natural resources and energy. But Africa was also seen as a solution of Europe's demographic problems, as it was widely agreed that Europe was overpopulated." Especially during the period of depression and unemployment in the 1930s, both "saving Europe and controlling Africa" were made dependent on "large-scale European emigration to Africa."[179] Coudenhove-Kalergi, a staunch critic of the racist persecution of Jews in Nazi Germany, wrote in 1937 that the project of a Jewish state in Palestine under the roof of the British Empire, although it might protect a limited number of European settlers against "the Arab threat," would not be sufficient to solve the problem of "the six million unassimilated eastern [European] Jews." Therefore, Great Britain should concede them land in thinly populated areas of Central or South Africa, but also "parts of the Portuguese Angola or the French Madagascar" might be considered. As he pointed out, "the future of the white race in black Africa hinges on white immigration"; thus, it was important to recognize "that the artificial racial antagonism between Jews and Christians

176 Frank H. Schmolck, "Über die natürliche Feindlichkeit der USA gegen die Geopolitik," *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* 20, no. 4–5 (1943): 153.

177 Hansen and Jonsson, *Eurafrica*, 84, 109.

178 Alois Fischer, "Zur Frage der Tragfähigkeit des Lebensraumes," part 2, *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* 2, no. 11 (1925): 851–53.

179 Peo Hansen and Stefan Jonsson, "Demographic Colonialism: EU–African Migration Management and the Legacy of Eurafrica," *Globalizations* 8, no. 3 (2011): 269–70.

must first of all retreat behind the real racial antagonism between whites and blacks."[180]

Two years earlier, Friedrich Wilhelm Borgmann had proposed in *Geopolitik* a comparison between Palestine, Birobidzhan (USSR), and Madagascar, where, as he noted, "the Polish government in particular is trying to relocate its large Jewish population" and had already begun negotiations with France. Of the three, Borgmann concluded that Madagascar was the most suitable homeland for Jews. Accepting this idea would be a "great gesture on the part of the French government, which would hereby render a service not only to the Jewish people, but also to all of mankind by positively solving the international Jewish problem."[181] The "solutions" to the alleged "problem" adopted during and after the war would spare Madagascar, but relocating a sufficient number of "whites" from "overpopulated" Europe to Africa remained a valuable consideration for the democratic promoters of Eurafrican projects. In a document prepared by the Council of Europe's Consultative Assembly in 1952, overpopulation was still seen as "one of Europe's most critical human and social problems," and especially Italy continued demanding "to provide for mass emigration to African colonies."[182]

Such were some of the plans for the "opening up," "exploitation," "development," and "valorization" of Africa and its riches—meanings all bundled into the German word *Erschließung*, which is typically associated also with the sterile technical operations of a land surveyor. For a long time, these plans were developed without considering to any significant extent the native African population. Sometimes Africans appeared in the role of passive recipients of charitable provisions or paternalistic intervention but almost never in the role of social or political subjects of their own. In engineer Karl Theens's treatise of 1949, which relaunched German and French plans of infrastructural *Erschließung* and a "massive settlement program" of Europeans to Africa, the existence of Africans was hardly even mentioned. The declared objective was instead "climate improvement and location value creation in areas of Inner Africa previously uninhabitable by white people" (Figure 6.1). Africans appeared as a demographic quantum or, in one or two cases, as a decoration of the author's stylized maps, where dark-skinned figures served as an iconological marker of "Africa."[183]

180 Richard N. Coudenhove-Kalergi, "Bemerkungen über die ostjüdische Frage, Palästina und Afrika," *Jüdische Revue* 2, (1937): 535–37.

181 Friedrich Wilhelm Borgmann, "Palästina, Birobijan oder Madagaskar?," *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* 16, no. 1 (1939): 10.

182 Hansen and Jonsson, *Eurafrica*, 115–16.

183 Karl Theens, *Der Sörgel-Plan: Afrika + Europa = Atlantropa* (Küster Nachf., 1949), 9, 14, 26.

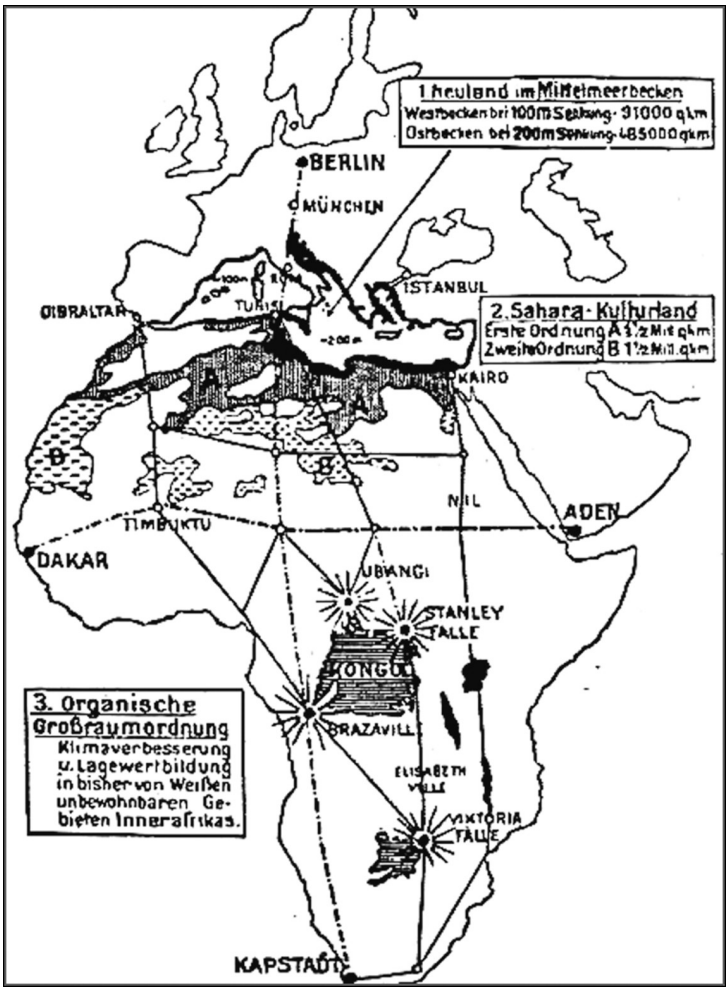


FIGURE 6.1 Atlantropa: Land reclamation in desert and sea, offshore hydroelectric power plants, power grid. Karl Theens, *Der Sörgel-Plan* (1949), permission Neue Westfälische GmbH

Admittedly, there were also differences in argumentation between the pre-war and post-war period. Fascist rhetoric was less about freedom and democracy. Like the Axis ideologues, most of the leading conservative, liberal, Christian democrat, or socialist political forces in France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands seemed to have little doubt that "Europe" had not only a right but also a duty to defend its colonial positions. But the latter added a specific reason for that: freedom. The former French politician Paul Reynaud summarized in 1952 before the Council of Europe: "We must

also, if free Europe is to be made viable, jointly exploit the riches of the African continent (…)."[184] The association between freedom and colonial possession became a frequent trope, which from time to time assumed racist undertones. German chancellor Adenauer, for example, confessed to find the "appearance of non-white peoples on the political stage of world events" disturbing.[185]

Initially, when the rising tide of anti-colonial movements made Britain, the Netherlands, and even France retreat from Asia, Africans living south of the Sahara still continued to be depicted as docile, simple-minded, and backward enough not to be easily infected by the anti-colonial virus. But soon European politics had to acknowledge that even there a push for decolonization began swelling. Consequently, the projects of infrastructure building, mining, and industrial exploitation were presented as forms of European philanthropic "aid" in favor of African welfare, development, and modernization, which would benefit the Africans themselves far more than any de-colonization. Probably the same idea was not cherished by too many Africans, as a growing political and even armed resistance suggested. Along such lines of conflict, "Eurafrican planning and militarized colonial repression fused seamlessly and successfully."[186] In 1957, at a time when his country was engaged in a bloody repression in Algeria and Cameroon, and Belgian troops and their local associates were on the verge of doing the same in Congo, French socialist premier Guy Mollet expressed his firm conviction that the association of African colonies with the European Economic Community (EEC) would "promote progress, happiness and democracy in Africa."[187] The Belgian member of the Council of Europe, Fernand Dehousse, warned that the universal mission of Europe would be fatally damaged by the independence of Algeria, to the great detriment of humanity as a whole.[188]

On the threshold of the 1960s, "Eurafrica" as a geopolitical "living space" and rhetorical reference point of the "Mediterranean vocation" of France, Italy, and other countries began to fade. Its geo-economic kernel, however, survived, for example, in the framework of the mutations of the CFA. De Gaulle's 1945 decreed Colonies françaises d'Afrique were in 1958 transformed into the Communauté française d'Afrique and split in 1962, after the formal independence of the French colonies into the Communauté Financière Africaine (now West African Economic and Monetary Union) and the Coopération financière

184 Quoted in Hansen and Jonsson, *Eurafrica*, 114.

185 Hansen and Jonsson, *Eurafrica*, 161.

186 Hansen and Jonsson, *Eurafrica*, 105–106.

187 Hansen and Jonsson, "Demographic Colonialism," 263.

188 Giuliano Garavini, *Dopo gli imperi. L'integrazione europea nello scontro Nord-Sud* (Le Monnier, 2009), 58.

en Afrique centrale (now Central African Economic and Monetary Community), respectively. After each passage, the French Treasury has continued to have direct control, through the CFA Franc arrangements that foresee its oversight, over the two central banks, the monetary policy, foreign exchange, and reserves deposits of no less than 14 African nations.[189]

This "post"-colonial French framework was integrated into a wider Eurafrican one through the association treaties between the EEC and eighteen African countries, signed in Yaoundé in 1963.[190] As Ghana's leader Kwame Nkrumah wrote, "the limited neo-colonialism of the French period is now being merged in the collective neo-colonialism of the European Common Market which enables other States, hitherto outside the French preserve, to profit by the system."[191] If "Eurafrica" faded, it was not because of the end of colonialism, which lived on and thrived after its neo-colonial metamorphosis. Rather, it faded because the geopolitical fantasy of a European-African "living space" or "second Monroe" independent from, or alternative to, American or "Anglo-Saxon" hegemony failed to materialize.

America, NATO, and the Cold War

American involvement in Mediterranean affairs was not completely new. Shortly after its constitution, the USA engaged in Mediterranean and Ottoman trade, took part in "punitive expeditions" against North-Africa in the early 1800s, and had an active role in the lingering economic colonization of Morocco and other places. The American-Moroccan friendship agreement of 1786 even predated the U.S. Constitutional Convention, and in the 1790s a U.S. Consulate opened in Tangier. Despite the numerous diplomatic and trade obstacles during the French wars between 1793 and 1815, "American captains seized the opportunity to expand their presence in the Mediterranean and to venture farther east, to the Adriatic and the Levant, as well as along the North African coast."[192] Based on these achievements, the following decades saw the further expansion of both U.S.-Mediterranean trade and the network of American consulates. The USA also had been one of the earliest colonizers in West Africa, in later formally independent Liberia, where since 1821 the American Colonization Society began a project of "black resettlement" that was detri-

189 Pigeaud and Samba Sylla, *Africa's Last Colonial Currency*, 19–23.

190 Gianfranco Vistosi, "L'associazione euro-africana: Bilancio di un decennio," *Aggiornamenti sociali* 19, no. 11 (1968): 675–84.

191 Kwame Nkrumah, *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (International Publishers, 1965), 19.

192 Marzagalli, "The United States and the Mediterranean," 66.

mental to indigenous interests no less than a "regularly white" settler-colonial imposition would have been.

American Protestant missionary and philanthropic networks were very active throughout the Ottoman Empire since before the *tanzimât* period, establishing schools and academic institutions, some of which, like Robert College in Istanbul and the Syrian Protestant College in Beirut, were destined to exert an inestimable influence over the education of intellectual elites and the mindset of political leaders. At the same time, American commercial and diplomatic activities also intensified. The latter included occasional chest-beating such as, for example, in 1860, when the long-standing American Consul General in Egypt, Edwin De Leon—at home a co-founder of the Young America movement—protested with the Egyptian government against the implementation of an International Tribunal destined to take over the jurisdiction of the individual consulates and against the fact that several countries, including the USA, "a country second to none in power and influence," remained excluded from its composition.[193] Or when, a few years later, the U.S. ambassador in Istanbul gave the Ottoman government "a rude but salutary lesson" by threatening to send an ironclad from the U.S. Squadron to Larnaca if a local guardsman and protégé of the American consul there was not immediately released from prison.[194]

It should also be recalled here that an American delegation, which included Henry Morton Stanley as an advisor, participated in the 1884 Berlin Conference for the colonization of Africa. In the following decade, the USA kept out of Africa's colonization but instead annexed Hawaii and took over Spanish colonies in the Pacific and the Caribbean. During the Second World War, the American recognition of European "rights" over Africa was attenuated not only by the military penetration of Mediterranean Africa but also by previous diplomatic and economic initiatives that already had spread over the continent, leading to the opening of consulates, the building of roads, and the creation of airports and flight routes.[195] After the war, U.S. foreign policy partly

193 ASDMAE, Legazione Sarda ad Alessandria d'Egitto, 1825–1866, busta 34, f Corrispondenze 1859–1860, De Leon to His Excellency Cherif Pacha, Minister of Foreign Affairs, July 24, 1860; numerous examples for the working of the consular jurisdiction can be seen in busta 23.

194 The quotation by Luigi Palma di Cesnola, at the time American Consul in Cyprus, is reported in Konstantina Zanou, *Sea of Antiquities: The Cesnola Brothers, the Global Mediterranean, and the Making of the Modern Museum* (Oxford University Press, forthcoming); I thank the author for sharing with me parts of her manuscript in advance.

195 Alfred Ernst Johann, "US Amerika in Afrika," *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* 20, no. 9 (1943): 317–21.

sided with the struggle for de-colonialization, for a number of reasons: opposing European colonialism helped expand American influence in Africa, enhance the competition with the British Commonwealth, subdue the remaining European colonial powers, and, last but not least, contain Marxist tendencies among the ranks and files of national liberation movements.

In the Mediterranean arena, America's foothold had become stronger in the wake of the First World War. American capital was massively involved in European debt and refinancing schemes that resulted from the peace treaties but also in foreign direct investment in electrification, railways, and mining, in particular oil drilling, in southern Europe, Mesopotamia, the Persian Gulf, the Caucasus, and North and East Africa. In Türkiye and "the Orient," as Paul Herre noted, the USA "virtually continues the role that Germany played before the World War." At the same time, their cultural influence in the Levant was enhanced. All this was a way to further American interests and keep European powers in check:

> Everywhere the American influence works as a moral strengthening of the native element and as an indirect promotion of the national will to self-assertion. It is only to be understood from the unassailable political and economic position of power of the actual victor in the world war that these activities on scorching oriental soil are accepted without resistance and objections on the part of the European victorious powers.[196]

Apart from the defiant tone of a disgruntled German loser of that war, Herre's analysis had a point, insofar as he rightly emphasized the economic and political character of Europe's growing subalternity in the Mediterranean theatre, the widely perceived strength of British power notwithstanding. In comparison, American military power had come in late and remained marginal. It was only during the Second World War that the American presence became massive. In 1942, the USA provided air support to the Allied campaign in North Africa. American troops participated in "Operation Torch." Simultaneously, the U.S. Navy began to build up its invasion forces in North-African harbors like Tunis, Casablanca, and Alexandria, gathering intelligence from South Italian fishermen and smugglers to prepare the Allied landing in Sicily.[197] After the successful Allied invasion of the island in 1943 and during the liberation of

196 Herre, *Weltgeschichte am Mittelmeer*, 434.

197 Rodney Campbell, *The Luciano project: the secret wartime collaboration of the Mafia and the U.S. Navy* (McGraw-Hill, 1977), 173–75.

Italy, the U.S. military presence in the Mediterranean continued growing. This time it was there to stay.

While these battles were unfolding in 1943–45, Great Britain, which had resisted the German assault, still enjoyed the image of a powerful empire with its own resourceful potential of further enhancement. In the summer of 1945, a New York journal of German-speaking Jewish emigrants discussed the "new constellation of power in the Mediterranean," wondering "Will the 'Mare Nostrum', Mussolini's shattered dream, become a 'Mare Britannicum'? Our map shows the efforts of English policy to secure the road to India everywhere and to make the Mediterranean an inland water dominated by England." The text went on discussing the British military presence in Sicily, Corfu, Albania, and the Aegean, and France's displacement from Syria and Lebanon.

> Thus, England alone has a position of power in the Near East, which protects the Suez Canal through its airfields in Cyprus, Palestine, Syria and Iraq, as well as from all surprises from the north. For the time being, the only opponent is Russia, which wants to gain a foothold in Tangier and is pushing through its ally, Yugoslavia, into the Mediterranean. Furthermore, Russia tries to blow up the gates of the Dardanelles. Recently its troops are also on the Bulgarian-Greek border, and it is clear from the map that Greece and its domination will decide who dominates the eastern Mediterranean. Will there be a division of power in the Mediterranean and what role will France play?[198]

To undergird the writer's reasoning, which also mentioned British air bases in Albania, the map designer disseminated air base symbols over Sicily, Pantelleria, Cyprus, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, and Iraq, money bags to represent the economic dependency of Spain and Portugal on Great Britain, and Union Jack symbols over Corfu, Crete, and Rhodes, as well as all over North Africa, from Egypt to Morocco, with the only exception of Algeria. "Russia" (the USSR), still formally an ally in the ending World War, was already mentioned as an opponent, France as a dark horse. No mention at all was made of the American presence in the Mediterranean, nor was there any stars-and-stripes symbol on the map (Figure 6.2).

The article and its strange omissions were symptomatic of the geopolitical uncertainties that would characterize the transition until 1956. It downplayed American geopolitical interest, as if the USA were just a bystander of the "momentous shift of forces in the Mediterranean" that the anonymous writer

198 [Anonymous], "Zwei Probleme von vielen: Neue Machtkonstellation im Mittelmeer," *Aufbau: Reconstruction* 11, no. 29 (1945): 1.



FIGURE 6.2 Britain's "lifeline" across the Mediterranean, 1945. *Aufbau: Reconstruction* 11, no 29, July 20 (1945): 1; permission Aufbau Archiv bei der Jüdischen Medien AG

had detected. In fact, the persistence of Britain's Mediterranean predominance in partnership with France, which had been such a powerful factor for more than a century, had still to be taken into account as a future possibility. But when seen from Washington, it increasingly resembled a solution that was only second best. While imperialist and colonialist Europe, even in its victorious democratic divisions, emerged relatively weakened from the war, communism was enjoying political traction, and the unruly colonies were standing up for their independence. For those who feared the consequences of such developments, American economic superiority and military prowess appeared to be the ultimate lifeline. A new European and Mediterranean order under U.S. influence looked more and more inevitable in their eyes, but its shape and form would take some time to define.

During the early post-war years, allied Mediterranean logistics relied mainly on French naval infrastructure in France and North Africa, and the aforementioned British naval and air bases. The transformation of the U.S. Naval Forces deployed to the Mediterranean during the war into the Sixth Fleet in 1950 and the establishment of the NATO Allied Forces Southern Europe Supreme Command in Naples in 1951 were signs that the tightening grip of American command turned into a stable arrangement. But this was the result of a step-by-step process, in which the Mediterranean extension of the Atlantic Pact was not granted from the start. That in early 1949 Italy would be one of NATO's founding members was made possible by both the electoral containment of the neutralist left in the 1948 elections and French pressure. After the Pact was

signed, Italian diplomacy joined forces with the Americans to clear the terrain for the admission also of Türkiye and Greece. They joined the Pact in 1952.[199]

The "delay" of the latter two countries' entrance was not only due to Greek-Turkish rivalry. To admit Türkiye made sense with a Greek land bridge toward Italy and Western Europe in between. But the ongoing bloodshed in Greece and concerns regarding the reliability of its pro-Western stance made the Americans still in late 1948 insist that a Greek admission "would require, first, crushing the communist rebellion; second, stabilizing Greece's internal situation; and third, increasing the Greek army from the 100,000 it presently comprises to 300,000 and later perhaps 500,000 men."[200] Turkish politicians fully agreed with "crushing the communist rebellion" but had to be persuaded that an enhancement of their neighbors' military capabilities was the right thing to do. The weakness of the Greek military that the Americans raised concerns about served also to legitimize the Anglo-American support of Greek government forces in the "Civil" War, which broke out in 1946. Before it was over and "won" in 1949, the Greek dossier could not be closed.

But there were more reasons still for the hesitancy to include Mediterranean countries into the Atlantic Pact. In 1946–48, the initial idea was to limit its geographical reach to western Europe and create alongside it a "Mediterranean Bloc," which sometimes was called also "Oriental Bloc"; a "Northern Bloc" of Scandinavian countries was also hypothesised to "pincer" the spaces of Soviet influence. The geography of the imagined "Mediterranean" or "Oriental" bloc starkly recalled the "Middle East." The idea was indeed British-American. It foresaw that together with Italy, Greece, and Türkiye, the "countries of the Arab League" would also join it "and perhaps also Persia, Afghanistan and Ethiopia." This projection of a "wider Mediterranean" deeply into East Africa and South-West Asia was driven by the twofold desire to foreclose the USSR and keep the vast West Asian oil resources under control.

France, unhappy with the geographical bias of a design that seemed to imply its own exclusion, strongly advocated Italy's admission into the "Western Bloc," thus favoring NATO's extension into the heart of the Mediterranean basin. It also succeeded in obtaining the inclusion of its Algerian overseas territory into the Pact's area. Türkiye backed the French position by emphasizing the political unreliability of the other potential candidates of the "Mediterranean/Oriental" pact. According to the Turks, only a Western alliance

199 Ferraris, ed., *Manuale*, 43–51.

200 Wolfgang Bretholz, "Marshall-Plan für Mittelmeer," *Aufbau: Reconstruction* 14, no. 49 (1948): 2.

would do, as "the two great western democracies are the only military powers that can successfully resist the Soviet Union."[201]

As the latter quotation shows, in 1948 Great Britain still enjoyed the reputation of a great power, although the shift from British to U.S. command would soon become evident. Beyond all subtle rivalries, the Mediterranean geostrategic interest of both powers had oil on the top of the priority list. Oil was a commodity of fundamental economic importance; thus, oil fields during the Cold War became playing fields in the worldwide competition between "freedom" and "totalitarianism." Access to oil, U.S. Treasury Secretary Robert Anderson glossed in 1960, "was as essential to mutual security as atomic warheads."[202] When Standard Oil began to drill and export Libyan oil in 1961, the big Anglo-American oil stain that went under the name of the "Middle East" floated back westward deeper into the "Mediterranean World."

During 1945–56, France and other European and riparian countries had an understandable interest in sorting out some more binding definitions from the confusingly overlapping salad of denominations of possible military pacts, economic treaties, and imaginative geographies. For America, this was far less important than a broad, unitary geostrategic vision of the Mediterranean and Middle East. This vision was reflected in the creation, in 1952, of a unified U.S. military command for the whole area, EUCOM, which was based in Stuttgart and had assigned geographical responsibilities for Europe and North Africa.

French-led efforts sustained by Germany, Belgium, and other European countries tried to transform NATO into the armed branch of the French-dominated Eurafrican common-market area, which they were working on. Thanks to the strong support for the French position among European member states, in 1952 the USA accepted the NATO association of the protectorates of Tunisia and Morocco. However, in 1955 tensions grew within the Atlantic Pact over the use of French NATO troops in Algeria. The Federal Republic of Germany threw its weight behind the French efforts, underlining how decolonization in Africa would represent a vital threat to Europe and the whole "free world." On the eve of the Suez Crisis, general Adolf Heusinger—who in 1944 had been the acting chief of the General Staff of Hitler's Wehrmacht and who in 1957 would be appointed Inspector General of the Bundeswehr and in 1961

201 Quotes in Bretholz, "Marshall-Plan für Mittelmeer," 2; see also Ferraris, ed., *Manuale*, 64–65.

202 Quote in Prashad, *Arab Spring, Libyan Winter*, 46, 104.

chairman of the NATO Military Committee—stressed the importance of securing French North Africa as NATO's "southern flank."[203]

A clarifying moment came in 1956, when in response to a Western refusal to finance the construction of the Aswan High Dam, Egyptian president Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir nationalized the British-French-owned Suez Canal Company.[204] At the end of October, in an endeavor to obtain the nationalization being lifted, French, British, and Israeli troops occupied the canal zone after inflicting a heavy toll of casualties on the defending Egyptian soldiers. The bellicose move was met with broad international criticism from adversaries and allies alike. Under the pressure of widespread condemnation and a U.S. threat of sanctions, the coalition withdrew handing over the canal zone to UN troops. In spring 1957, Egypt could reopen the canal, while Nāṣir's international reputation rose steeply. The Suez Crisis hammered the final nail in the coffin of the British Empire and catalyzed the decay of the French Empire. In Western Europe, it unequivocally confirmed the American position at the top of command, and this had consequences also for the Mediterranean.

Initially, however, the American inclination towards stronger cooperation with the oil-rich "Arab World" in the "Middle East" still encountered some resistance among European partners. French-German efforts continued to create military and industrial counterweights against a unilateral dependency on the USA. One such initiative was the EURATOM agreement, joined also by Italy. Politicians and media that continued to support the French political and military interventions in defense of its colonial possessions attacked Arab nationalist and Pan-Africanist movements. While, for example, German chancellor Konrad Adenauer likened Nāṣir to Hitler, the Italian journalist and future prime minister Giovanni Spadolini referred to the Algerian National Liberation Front (NLF) as a "terrorist" organization that had no other objective than "digging an ever deeper, ever more unbridgeable furrow between the two shores of the Mediterranean."[205]

Yet these efforts turned out to be rear-guard actions. According to Katerina Dalacoura, after "the debacle of the Suez War of 1956, Britain and France were ignominiously pushed out from their former areas of colonial influence in the Levant." She continues by noting that a "geographical sub-division prevailed," according to which the Americans reserved to themselves the supervision of

203 Hansen and Jonsson, *Eurafrica*, 196–207.

204 Garavini, *Dopo gli imperi*, 35.

205 Giovanni Spadolini, "La libera Africa del generale" [1958], in Giovanni Spadolini, *L'enigma di De Gaulle (1958–1970)* (Fondazione Nuova Antologia, 1990), 34; on Adenauer, see Hansen and Jonsson, *Eurafrica*, 160.

the oil-rich "Middle East," while the western Mediterranean was left instead "within the purview of U.S. European allies."[206]

However, in the wake of the Suez Crisis, American control appears to have been strengthened in the western, "Latin," basin as well. In particular, France had to downsize its ambitions as soon as the unconditioned American backing of its role as the western guardsman in the Maghreb ended. There was "no longer any question for the United States to help France to conduct another 'Indochinese War'" in Algeria. The USA was afraid that France's stubborn clinging to colonial power might provoke a radicalization able to jeopardize America's own presence in the Maghreb. For the same reason, "France was forced to grant independence to Tunisia and Morocco."[207] After that, in 1958, France advanced proposals for a "Mediterranean Community" dedicated to the common exploitation of North African mineral resources and relaunched the idea of a "Mediterranean Pact" for security, which had been originally proposed by Francoist Spain. It would also comprise the Maghreb countries, Italy, Greece, and Türkiye. But Morocco and Tunisia rejected the plan as neocolonial, while the USA ambiguously "welcomed" it with a counterproposal. Its suggestion was to create a Western Mediterranean Commonwealth composed by France, Morocco, Tunisia, and Libya, thus tracing a narrow perimeter of allowed French influence.[208] And instead of pushing NATO deeper into the African continent, as France, Germany, and others desired, American EUCOM was extended in subsequent steps to the entire "Middle East," including Saudi Arabia, the Gulf region, and Iran, and later even to parts of Central Africa.

Even with the hitherto successful management of Greek-Turkish rivalry, the subordination of Great Britain, and France bogged down in its colonial quagmire, the USA still had to face some other, if minor, Mediterranean annoyances within the European camp. Italy was trying to refurbish its image with an anti-colonial patina to improve its relations with Arab leaders, for reasons of energy security and to create a certain counterweight to French and British influence.[209] Leading factions within the governing Christian-Democratic Party doubled down on Italy's "geopolitical role as a Mediterranean country," arguing that "the decolonization ferment of the Third World"

206 Katerina Dalacoura, "US Outlook on the Mediterranean," in *Routledge Handbook of Mediterranean Politics*, ed. Richard Gillespie and Frédéric Volpi (Routledge, 2018): 111.

207 Ravenel, *Mediterranée*, 47–48.

208 Lepenies, *Die Macht am Mittelmeer*, 51–53.

209 Ferraris, ed., *Manuale*, 66–68.

offered "a favourable opportunity to re-enter major international politics."[210] Observing the U.S. distancing itself from French and British attempts to cling to their crumbling empires, these politicians hoped Italy could become a new transatlantic bridgehead in the Mediterranean. This, however, proved a miscalculation.

What bothered American government circles most was the assertive behavior of the Italian state-owned Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi (ENI), which between 1953 and 1961 acquired oil-drilling rights in Somalia, Egypt, Iran, Morocco, Libya, Sudan, and Tunesia, offering favorable deals to the producer countries and defying Anglo-Dutch and even American interests. Its president, Enrico Mattei, also acquired cheap oil shipments from the Soviet Union and sought cooperation with the NLF regarding newly discovered Algerian oil and gas fields. U.S. and French government officials, and members of the cartel of oil compagnies that had formed to oppose the nationalization of the Iranian oil industry, were upset. Given Algerian leader Aḥmad bin Balla's "collusion with Nasser's pan-Arabism," the building of a broad anti-Western front from North Africa to Mesopotamia was feared.[211] Mattei holding talks with leaders of the North African independence struggle regarding the exploitation of Saharan oil and gas wells, and purportedly encouraging "steps in the direction of the hoped-for federation between Maghreb countries," including Libya, most probably lit red alarm lights in Western capitals like Paris and Washington.[212]

Yet, to Italy's disappointment, "the Franco-British decline in the Mediterranean and the Middle East led the Unites States to assume direct responsibility in the region."[213] The Americans saw little need for a self-proclaimed geopolitical intermediary whose contractually fair dealings with oil-producing countries made it appear more like a rival capable of undermining their neocolonial practices. It is reported that in August 1961, Charles Douglas Jackson, a former Office of Strategic Services (OSS) specialist, in a confidential report to the White House signaled that Italy might become a leading competitor in the "African and Middle Eastern basin of the Mediterranean" and that the CIA warned state secretary Dean Rusk against the "role of Enrico Mattei in the

210 Carola Cerami, "Could the 'Mattei Plan' be reinvented for Africa? A historical perspective," *Il Politico* 89, no. 2/261 (2024): 104, 106.

211 Spadolini, *L'enigma di De Gaulle*, 60.

212 Egidio Ceccato, *Il delitto Mattei: Complicità italiane in un'operazione segreta della Guerra Fredda* (Castelvecchi, 2019), 105.

213 Cerami, "Could the 'Mattei Plan' be reinvented," 107.

Italian domestic and foreign policy."[214] As it happened, in October 1962 the energetic president of ENI fell victim to an air crash. In the 1960s, ministerial and judicial investigators, and most of the press, rapidly concluded that the accident was caused by technical malfunction or human error; eyewitnesses, if interrogated at all, changed their initial version, and several documents and relics related to the case disappeared shortly after. According to a prosecutor who conducted a new inquiry in 1994–2003, the earlier investigations and reports appeared to be a political cover-up of what a new technical commission suggested was a veritable murder, caused by an explosive load placed on the plane by unknown actors.[215]

One last pivotal aspect of U.S. strategic interest in the Mediterranean was the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. With the erosion of British-French influence in the Levant, it became "more directly of U.S., rather than European, concern." However, various hurdles had to be removed before "the defence of Israel" could definitely be considered "one of the bedrocks" of U.S. foreign policy.[216] In its early years, the state of Israel irritated the USA by joining forces with France and Great Britain during the Suez Crisis, at a time when the Eisenhower administration was seeking to consolidate its new leading position in the "Middle East" by maintaining good relations with the Arab states. Although Eisenhower's successor, John F. Kennedy, professed to be no less "in favor of maintaining a balance between Israel and the Arab states" and safeguarding "American influence" on the latter, during his administration and that of his successor, Lyndon B. Johnson, U.S.-Israeli relations tightened decisively.[217] This recalibration notwithstanding, not even during the 1960s were bilateral relations without frictions, mainly because of the American government's declared "desire to put a stop to the manufacture of Israeli nuclear weapons." Yet Israel, whose interests enjoyed increasing support in Congress, "skilfully exploited the administration's fears in order to establish still closer

214 Nico Perrone, *Enrico Mattei* (il Mulino, 2001), 130, 130, 160; Ceccato, *Il delitto Mattei*, 95; Garavini, *Dopo gli imperi*, 94.

215 Mario Consani, "L'ultimo magistrato che indagò sulla morte di Enrico Mattei: 'Fu certamente omicidio'," *Il giorno*, October 25, 2022, accessed April 29, 2023, https://www.ilgiorno.it/cronaca/mattei-come-morto-ucciso-0b364e64.

216 Dalacoura, "US Outlook on the Mediterranean," 111.

217 National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum Archives, Oral Histories (JFKOH), Myer Feldman Oral History Interview JFK#12, 8/26/1967, 555, accessed April 18, 2025, https://www.jfklibrary.org/asset-viewer/archives/jfkoh-mf-12; for historical context, see Warren Bass, *Support Any Friend: Kennedy's Middle East and the Making of the U.S.-Israel Alliance* (Oxford University Press, 2003), 1–14.

American-Israeli relations and procure even better arms deals."[218] The Israelis would even get away with attacking the U.S. Navy ship *Liberty* during the 1967 Six-Day War, during which its armed forces succeeded in occupying the Golan Heights, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and the Sinai Peninsula.[219]

The 1973 October War, in which Egypt and Syria tried to recover their territories in the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights under Israeli occupation, ended with a truce mediated "under the joint auspices of the Soviet Union and the United States." After that, U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger managed to sideline Syria (which at the time was embroiled in the brutal Lebanese Civil War), "freeze out" the Palestine Liberation Organization, and exclude the USSR from further Israeli-Arab negotiations, which would lead to the 1978 Camp David Accords and the 1979 Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty under American auspices. The two agreements "signalled US alignment with the most extreme expression of Israel's negation of Palestinian rights."[220] As a consequence, U.S. influence in the "Middle East" and the Arabian Peninsula reached a new peak, while the Soviets saw their strategic standing weaken. But the October War and its aftermath also revealed "the inherent, perhaps even structural, weakness of Europe as a global political actor."[221]

This is also because the "Middle East" was dragged into the dynamics of a major global geo-economic shift. After American gold reserves had thinned out during the Vietnam War and the Nixon administration ended gold parity in 1971, the Yom Kippur War helped the USA regain the economic upper hand over the European export nations that had accumulated a dollar overhang. The oil export boycott of its Arab members during the war allowed the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to quadruple oil prices. The 1974 U.S.-Saudi agreements, which eased the so-called Petrodollar recycling, backed the USD's world-reserve-currency function with the investment of Arab oil export revenues in U.S. government bonds, bank deposits, and securities.[222] U.S. banks "gained the monopoly privilege of recycling the petrodollars into the world economy, thus bringing the Eurodollar market back home."[223]

218 Moshe Gat, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1956–1975. From Violent Conflict to a Peace Process* (Routledge, 2018), 76–77.

219 A. Jay Cristol, *The Liberty Incident* (Potomac Books, 2002).

220 Khalidi, *The Hundred Years' War*, 136.

221 Rory Miller, "Faraway Causes, Immediate Effects: The War and European Consequences," in *The October 1973 War*, ed. Asaf Siniver (Hurst & Company, 2012), 172.

222 Council Of Europe, Parliamentary Assembly, Committee on Economic Affairs and Development. Preliminary draft report on the role of petro-dollars in Western Europe, Strasbourg, January 22, 1976, iv, accessed February 23, 2025, https://rm.coe.int/0900001 6807a17b0.

223 David Harvey, *The New Imperialism* (Oxford University Press, 2003), 62.

At the same time, this arrangement would cement the long-term financial and strategic dependence of the mostly British-installed Gulf monarchies on America.

Although in the long run the USA would reduce its dependence on the region's oil, thanks to its wider implications, the Yom Kippur War of 1973 definitely sealed the leading American role in the Mediterranean. At this point, the question arises whether the geostrategic repositioning of the Mediterranean Sea since the end of the Second World War altered its imaginative geography.

American Investment in Braudel's "Universal Europe"

If up to World War I the Mediterranean Sea had been a British-French domain according to military and geostrategic parameters, by the same token it came under American egis between the mid-1940s and the mid-1970s. Therefore, we cannot conclude this chapter without considering how the American efforts in contrasting the Soviet Union and their befriended nationalist governments in Africa and Asia involved not only the geostrategic repositioning of the Mediterranean Sea but also its imaginative geography.

The Suez debacle of the formerly preponderant powers set a seal of success on the American effort in creating a multi-layered architecture of military, economic, and political cooperation. As a result, most of the northern Mediterranean rim—Portugal, France, Italy, Greece, Türkiye—was united under the roof of regional organizations such as NATO. Francoist Spain was also tied to the USA through the 1953 Pact of Madrid and its agreement to cede military installations on Spanish soil. In addition, the Yugoslav split from the USSR, with Albania ready to go down the same road, had calmed fears that the Soviets might gain a direct coastal foothold on the sea. While the "Middle East" shifted from under a British and French tutelage to an American one, and Morocco and Tunisia took a pro-Western stance, it turned out that even Egypt and later Libya and Algeria, although enjoying Soviet backing, "maintained a certain distance from Moscow."[224] Subsequent developments would lead "to the military-ideological defeat of Arab Socialism and the consolidation of U.S.-led imperialism in the region via its support of regional conservative allies, the petrodollar monarchies of the Gulf."[225] Had it not been for the

224 Francesco Cavatorta, "Historical/Geopolitical Turning Points in the Modern Mediterranean," in *Routledge Handbook of Mediterranean Politics*, ed. Richard Gillespie and Frédéric Volpi (Routledge, 2018), 25.

225 Capasso, "The perils of capitalist modernity," 633.

enduring resistance in Palestine, and bilateral tensions like those between Greece and Türkiye, the relations in the area could be considered settled according to U.S. interest.

In the process America grew familiar with the Mediterranean but kept observing it from above and afar. The previous British hegemony likewise had been guided by a view of the area as a strategic token in a global jigsaw. The British-French partnership within the region nevertheless had contributed to the longevity of the arrangement. If indirectly, the "Mediterranean World" from which French and other European power politics drew their legitimization by extension undergirded the British geopolitical endeavour as well. It helped the UK shape together with other European powers the Mediterranean space of action and its hierarchies. The related narratives were primarily of French and German intellectual imprint, but British culture had been willing to appreciate, metabolize, and elaborate on those narratives, acknowledging their importance for the overall meaning of "Europe" as well as their sentimental flavour and political usefulness. The new geopolitical setting that emerged from the Second World War could not but raise the question whether there was still a use for the "Mediterranean World."

Regarding this "world," we might anticipate that there was much less of a reshaping involved than a continuation and even an unprecedented popularization of the same picture that, since Napoleon's deeds and Hegel's words, had defined the European view of the Mediterranean space as one unique region. If there was any shift, it was on the level of accents and nuances. For example, the discourse had to be wiped clean from the instances of anti-American and anti-British rhetoric uttered by intellectual supporters of Eurafrica during and even after the war, to make it more smoothly fit with the post-war Atlanticist setting. But on the level of basic concepts, there was no wheel requiring new invention. Since Humboldt, Europe's "passage west" through the Atlantic had always been a core element of the Mediterranean metaphor. Like in other previous circumstances, the precise wording could be adapted to the moment's language, for instance, from the "spread of civilization" (Humboldt) to colonial "world dominance" (Herre) and "a certain unity of capitalism, from 13th-century Italy to the present-day West" (Braudel).[226]

In the post-war climate, public opinion in the predominantly Arab-speaking countries of North Africa and West Asia perceived the Middle Sea as a dividing line between themselves and "the western world," whose (neo-)colonial aspirations continued to impede "the Arab-Muslim south from ever emerging as an

226 Fernand Braudel, *Civilisation materielle, Economie et Capitalisme, XVe-XVIIIe Siecle*, vol. 2 (Armand Colin, 1979), 433.

equal power."[227] In this context, Braudel's *Mediterranée* of 1949, while reiterating the geohistorical maxims of the so-called Mediterranean World, "was at once recognized as a historical classic."[228] That henceforth many of those same old tropes would be rebranded "Braudelian" as if they were new had not only to do with the work's historiographic quality and narrative fascination. Its broad echo could thrive and prosper on a fertile political ground, manured by organized efforts to disseminate Western views of Europe and the Mediterranean, with the aim to at least bring together Western academia and public opinion behind the geopolitical goals of their leaders. Can the ivory tower of scholarship realistically exert similar traction? According to Diana Mishkova, "academic discourses are a powerful social mechanism for constructing space."[229] Both French government and American philanthropy seemed to share this insight.

In 1948, William J. Donovan, the former head of U.S. wartime intelligence OSS, took the lead of the privately funded American Committee on United Europe, which supported the federalist European Movement to which adhered Paul-Henri Spaak, Robert Schuman, and other key figures of the early European integration process. In the same year, Donovan was in contact with Arthur Koestler, a former communist intellectual who became a central figure in the cultural mobilization of the "Non-Communist Left." The promotion of anti-Soviet left-wing cultural circles, and those of liberals and right-wingers preferably with a renegade pedigree, became a central strategy of "psychological warfare" and cultural investment, coordinated by the newly formed Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of State with American private organizations active in Europe and around the world. One symbolic event in the struggle to contain communist influence was the Congress for Cultural Freedom, organized in Berlin in June 1950 by Koestler and other intellectuals with American funding. Among the French attendees there also were many who, according to Frances Stonor Saunders, "identified the survival of Europe with the American savior."[230]

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227 Yahia H. Zoubir, *The North-South Divide*, in *Routledge Handbook of Mediterranean Politics*, ed. Richard Gillespie and Frédéric Volpi (Routledge, 2018): 98.

228 Hugh R. Trevor-Roper, "Fernand Braudel, the Annales, and the Mediterranean," *The Journal of Modern History* 44, no. 4 (1972): 472.

229 Diana Mishkova, *Beyond Balkanism: The Scholarly Politics of Region Making* (Routledge, 2019), 239.

230 Frances Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (The New Press, 2013): 48–71, 143; see also Hugh Wilford, *The CIA: An Imperial History* (Basic Books, 2024), 11; Lester Markel et al., *Public Opinion and Foreign Policy. Council of Foreign Relations* (Harper & Brothers, 1949); Volker R. Berghahn, *America and the Intellectual Cold Wars in Europe* (Princeton University Press, 2001); Sarah Ellen Gra-

According to a 1985 confidential CIA research paper, the American cultural investments in France gained their most conspicuous yield in the heterogenous field of "non-orthodox Marxist," structuralist, and post-structuralist philosophy, which in the USA had been bundled since the 1960s under the name of French Theory. The paper lauded in particular *Nouvelle Philosophie*, furthered by "former Communists who had left the party after the traumatic events of May 1968" and managed to marginalize communist scholarship in French academia.[231] Yet another valuable contribution to this welcome result had come from a repositioning of historiography within the field of social sciences:

> Among postwar French historians, the influential school of thought associated with Marc Bloch, Lucien Febvre, and Fernand Braudel has overwhelmed the traditional Marxist historians. The Annales school, as it is known from its principal journal, turned French historical scholarship on its head in the 1950s and 1960s, primarily by challenging and later rejecting the hitherto dominant Marxist theories of historical progress. Although many of its exponents maintain that they are "in the Marxist tradition," they mean only that they use Marxism as a critical point of departure for trying to discover the actual patterns of social history.[232]

Charles Morazé was an economic and social historian at the École Pratique des Hautes Études and co-director of *Annales*. He maintained close ties with Gaullist politician Christian Fouchet, who served as Minister for Moroccan and Tunisian Affairs in the mid-1950s before briefly becoming High Commissioner in Algeria and later Minister of Education. In 1947, Morazé obtained funding from the Rockefeller Foundation that allowed him to create, together with his colleagues Lucien Febvre and Fernand Braudel, the Sixth Section of the École Pratique dedicated to economic and social sciences, which in 1975 would become École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales. Braudel took

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ham, *Culture and Propaganda: The Progressive Origins of American Public Diplomacy, 1936–1953* (Routledge, 2016).

231 Directorate of Intelligence, *France: Defection of Leftist Intellectuals. A Research Paper*, EUR 85-10199, December 1985, in FOIA Electronic Reading Room, CIA, Sanitized Copy Approved for Release, May 13, 2011, 4–5, accessed April 11, 2023, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP86S00588R000300380001-5.pdf. See also François Cusset, *French Theory: Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze & Cie et le mutations de la vie intellectuelle aux Etats-Unis* (La Découverte, 2005), 27–40; and Gabriel Rockhill, "The Myth of 1968 Thought and the French Intelligentsia: Historical Commodity Fetishism and Ideological Rollback," *Monthly Review* 75, no. 2 (2023): 27–30.

232 Directorate of Intelligence, *France: Defection of Leftist Intellectuals*, 6.

over the direction of the section in 1956, after Febvre's demise. Another organizational key figure was Clemens Heller, the inspiration for the Salzburg Seminar in 1947, who joined the Sixth Section in 1951 as a PhD fellow, where he became *directeur d'études* in 1955. Together with Braudel, he explored the possibilities to substitute the expiring Rockefeller funding. The father of the "Marshall Plan of the Mind," as the Salzburg Seminar was occasionally nicknamed, in 1960 helped Braudel to obtain a one-million-dollar financing from the Ford Foundation, where an administrator of the actual Marshall Plan, Paul Hoffman, had previously served as president.[233]

In June 1961, one year after the finalizing of the Ford Foundation's grant to EHESS, special assistant to John F. Kennedy, Arthur B. Schlesinger, Jr., wrote to the recently sworn-in U.S. President in a confidential letter:

> In the Paris Embassy today, there are 128 CIA people. CIA in Paris has long since begun to move into areas of political reporting normally occupied by State. The CIA men doing overt political reporting outnumber those in the Embassy's political section 10–2. CIA has even sought to monopolise contact with certain French political personalities, among them the President of the National Assembly. CIA occupies the top floor of the Paris Embassy, a fact well known locally, and on the night of the Generals' revolt in Algeria, passers-by noted with amusement that the top floor was ablaze with lights.[234]

Schlesinger's description is relevant here as a matter of political context, as it complains about the degree to which America's foreign policy, in France and around the world, was de facto co-determined by its unelected and hardly controllable intelligence community. But it is also interesting as a matter of cultural background. According to Hugh Wilford, the mindset of many of the CIA's leading figures was profoundly contaminated by British-French colonial traditions: They admired the brilliance of secret action that, combined with technological supremacy, had allowed European countries to dominate huge masses of land and folk for such a long time, their own limited demographic and military size notwithstanding. The French and British secret services had

233 Francis X. Sutton, "The Ford Foundation's Transatlantic Role and Purposes, 1951–81," *Review* (*Fernand Braudel Center*) 24, no. 1 (2001): 77–104.

234 National Archives (NA), JFK Assassination Records, 2025 Documents Release, Letter from Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., to John F. Kennedy, "CIA Reorganization," Washington, D.C., June 30, 1961, 9–10, accessed April 19, 2025, https://www.archives.gov/files/research/jfk/releases/2025/0318/176-10030-10422.pdf. At the time, president of the French National Assembly was Jacques Chaban-Delmas; Arthur B. Schlesinger Jr. was a Harvard-trained historian and former OSS analyst.

indeed been "also designed to meet the challenges of governing and defending great empires in the age of the 'New Imperialism', the scramble for colonies under way in Asia and Africa." In the colonies, they had specialized in finding out "the intentions of rival imperialists and taking covert measure to supress potential insurgencies or strengthen client regimes in the colonies themselves."[235]

American covert action after World War Two would not fully replicate the model, in part because de-colonization was recognized as a just cause in much of American public opinion and even inside the early CIA, America's own colonial practices notwithstanding. Nevertheless, its officers found themselves struggling against real and imaginary Communist adversaries in territories, or former territories, of decaying colonial empires, where they were constantly enmeshed "in, so to speak, imperial situations." Biographical scrutiny has also disclosed the centrality that the history, literature, and cinema of colonial conquest and rule held as a source of inspiration for many of the agency's leading figures. Their imaginary hall of fame was filled with literary heroes like Kimball O'Hara and real-life "heroes" like the astute French colonial officer Louis-Hubert Lyautey and the British "Lawrence of Arabia." Rudyard Kipling's spy novel *Kim* "did not merely reflect the real spy world; it also helped shape it." The entire phenomenon can be summed up in the person of Allan Dulles, who was "a Kipling devotee (he had a copy of *Kim* on his bedside table when he died), a personal acquaintance of T. E. Lawrence, whom he had met at the Paris peace conference, and an admirer of British intelligence." As Wilford concludes, "a variety of social and cultural influences shaped the early CIA—but the imperial impulse was the dominant one."[236]

To return to American cultural policy in France, it is interesting to note that the chairman of the Ford Foundation's Board of Trustees, John McCloy, also had an intelligence background. During the war, McCloy had played a leading role in the creation of OSS, which later became the CIA led by his friend Allan Dulles. After the war, he had been the High Commissioner for Germany at the time of Koestler's Congress. Now he acted as the founding chairman of the freshly merged Chase Manhattan Bank and, according to Stonor Saunders, strongly favored the strengthening of trans-Atlantic ties with Europe and "took a pragmatic view of the CIA's inevitable interest in the Ford Foundation."[237] Earlier, he had been a trustee of the Rockefeller Foundation and president of the World Bank; after President Kennedy's murder, he was appointed

235 Wilford, *The CIA*, 2–3.
236 Wilford, *The CIA*, 5, 16–17, 46–47.
237 Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War*, 118.

a member of the Warren Commission. McCloy perfectly personified the indissoluble twine between mighty American banks and corporations, government, military, and intelligence, as well as philanthropic and scientific activities.

All these aspects formed part of the environment that Braudel—the "entrepreneur of new designs for history and the social sciences in France," as characterized by Ford Foundation long-term official Francis Xavier Sutton—would navigate with extraordinary success.[238] In 1963, another of his initiatives would indeed attract one of the most important grants that "the Ford Foundation has made in France and even more broadly, in western Europe."[239] With French government funds and consistent financing granted by the Ford Foundation, the Paris *Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme* (FMSH) came to life. It would become a major factor in boosting the *Annales* school's international influence. To pursue his objective, Braudel had joined forces with the former secretary general of the Fulbright Commission for France and philosopher Gaston Berger. He would remain at the head of FMSH until his death. The Ford Foundation, under its new president, former national security adviser McGeorge Bundy, continued to support the project up until the mid-1970s.[240]

Following Francis Sutton, although the "ideological purposes" behind the foundation's support "may seem clear," one also has to understand the more complex dynamics of intellectual debate and personal networks behind these choices.[241] Barbara Picht agrees that metaphors like "Cold War" and "Iron Curtain" tend to oversimplify the complex environment of intellectual commitment and political action, maintaining "that it was not the Cold War that motivated Braudel to put out feelers to the USA. Rather, something had developed there—partly due to and promoted by the Cold War—that interested him primarily for methodological reasons and in the interest of his own science-political goals."[242]

238 Sutton, "The Ford Foundation's Transatlantic Role," 82.

239 Sutton, "The Ford Foundation's Transatlantic Role," 83.

240 Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War*, 119. On these events see more broadly Barbara Picht, *Die "Interpreten Europas" und der Kalte Krieg. Zeitdeutungen in den französischen, deutschen und polnischen Geschichts-und Literaturwissenschaften* (Wallstein, 2022), 249–59; Maurice Aymard, "Braudel et Heller," in *Clemens Heller: Impresario des sciences de l'homme*, ed. Hinnerk Bruhns et al. (Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2018), 73–93; Brigitte Mazon, *Aux origines de l'Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales, le rôle du mécénat américain, 1920–1960* (Les Editions du Cerf, 1988), 128–29; Gemelli, *Fernand Braudel*, 209–15.

241 Sutton, "The Ford Foundation's Transatlantic Role," 79.

242 Picht, *Die "Interpreten Europas,"* 255.

Braudel interacted indeed not only with American social sciences—a heterogeneous field that included, among others, Immanuel Wallerstein—but various other strands of thought, including even some based in Eastern European socialist countries. Apparently, he relativized the bloc confrontation as a more ephemeral ripple in the political surface of the continental *longue durée*, since in his view "Europe" was the deeper structure that reigned over both of its poles. "There will or would only be a decline of Europe in the strict sense of the word if the sceptre of power passed to India or China or Japan and thus was taken over by a non-European power in the sense of this Greater Europe."[243] Although this appeared to him a remote hypothesis, Braudel promoted the study of areas that for the moment remained renitent to universal Europeanization, such as "the economy of the USSR and the Slavic peoples, the sociology and ethnology of Black Africa, the ethnology of North Africa and the art and archaeology of the Far East."[244]

How did all this play out for the idea of a "Mediterranean World"? As we have highlighted throughout the previous pages, the narrative underlying Braudel's *monde méditerranéen* was largely the same as during the previous century and a half. If for no other reason, for this fact alone could it hardly be "a product of the ideology of the Atlantic Pact," as communist intellectuals of the time were blamed to claim. In actual fact, however, Jeannine Verdès-Lerroux reports that the communist publicist Jacques Chambaz accused *Annales* of "justifying" the Atlantic Pact, which is different from producing.[245] More precisely, Chambaz, who wrote under the pen name Jacques Blot, characterized Morazé and Braudel as conservatives who, the latter's contrived recognition of Marx notwithstanding, had converted the once progressive *Annales* to Nicolae Iorga's idea that history is the study of permanence. Chambaz anticipated that, although Braudel clearly had embraced "Jacques Pirenne's theses of a 'history partitioned between the alternating predominance of the land and of the sea', the latter 'democratic, commercial and individualist' and the former 'absolutist, dominating and aristocratic', some will perhaps cry out for misinterpretation if we write that such theories justify the Atlantic Pact."[246]

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243 Fernand Braudel, "Europa erobert den Erdkreis," in *Europa: Bausteine seiner Geschichte*, ed. Fernand Braudel (Fischer, 1989), 11.

244 Picht, *Die 'Interpreten Europas,"* 257.

245 Jeannine Verdès-Leroux, *Au service du parti: Le parti communiste, les intellectuels et la culture (1944–1956)* (Fayard, 1983), 252; the author identifies Blot with Chambaz on page 500.

246 Jacques Blot, "Le révisionnisme en histoire ou l'École des Annales," *La nouvelle critique* 30 (1951): 59.

At any rate, the drafting of Braudel's *Méditerrannée* had started long before the foundation of NATO, and its underlying concepts were clearly not an invention of American spinmeisters. Those were homegrown, European, especially French and German, concepts. If anything, it was French historians like Braudel who now "exported" them to America. The foremost point of American co-funding by the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations was not the creation but the dissemination and amplification of those concepts. One might even say that it contributed to upholding a European idea of the "Mediterranean World," which was in tune also with French power interests.

During those years, the Mediterranean Sea still lay at the crossroads of French (neo-)colonial connections with Asia and Africa. Braudel was on the record for speaking out "firmly in favour of France sticking to North Africa."[247] But colonialism, which was more widely discredited than before, could create intellectual embarrassment. George Steinmetz has detected that *Annales*'s editorial line, especially after Braudel took over its direction in 1956, focused on "the medieval and early modern periods, as well as the ancient world," whereas the "colonial present was now kept at arm's length, covered mainly in book reviews and articles written by sociologists, geographers, and ethnologists."[248]

It seems legitimate to assume that the dissemination of Europe's Mediterranean imaginative geography and its seamless insertion into the new geopolitical setting was in the American geopolitical interest as well. In several instances, American anti-colonialism showcased at the United Nations turned out to be conditional rather than principled, also because it was in the nature of American capitalism no less than European capitalism to pursue profit and rent by draining wealth from other countries.[249] Also, American power could not unfold in this world region without building alliances in Western and Southern Europe. Thus, it was hardly in U.S. interest if the mythical narrative kernel of the "Mediterranean World" was irreversibly discredited—as it might well have been the case, given the results of both world wars, the crumbling European empires, and the rise of anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism in Africa and Asia. Instead, thanks to Braudel's work and its broad dissemination, for which French and American funding jointly helped to create potent echo chambers, the narrative received an unprecedented boost that prevented it

247 Borutta, "Braudel in Algier," 18.

248 George Steinmetz, *The Colonial Origins of Modern Social Thought: French Sociology and the Overseas Empire* (Princeton University Press, 2023), 128–29.

249 Michael Hudson, *The Destiny of Civilization: Finance Capitalism, Industrial Capitalism or Socialism* (ISLET, 2022), 52–59.

from suffering a crisis of credibility. What Giuliana Gemelli writes with regard to the late 1960s' intellectual and social revolt in our view can be extended to the whole post-war period, when a vacillating confidence in European universalism and colonial supremacy produced "a kind of nostalgia for the unity of *Western Civilization*, apt to integrate the European roots of American culture; to this demand of unity Braudel offered a constructive answer in terms of historical genealogy."[250] The author's masterpiece on the *monde méditerranéen* came right on cue to facilitate the projection of the entire West onto the Mediterranean region without even a need to de-Europeanize it.

250 Gemelli, *Fernand Braudel*, 16.

Epilogue

More than half a century has passed since the October War of 1973 and the U.S.-Saudi Petrodollar arrangements. In this period, the umpteenth Western geographical label has been allotted to a portion of the Mediterranean coast and borderlands. "Middle East and North Africa" (MENA) distinguishes once again the shore of the Other from our shore. Since the late 1970s, the Euro-Atlantic West has succeeded in wiping the "other shore" clean of the influence of socialism, as well as in pushing back Pan-Arab nationalism. With the help of local governments, investors, and non-governmental organizations, this success has been consolidated thanks to the penetration of the media landscape and civil society. Simultaneously, befriended Gulf monarchies intensified their funding of institutions and associations inspired by their favorite variants of political Islam. Their activity has created geopolitical synergies and occasional conflicts with the West both within the region and beyond.

Following the fall of the Soviet Union, the U.S. and its allies have repeatedly resorted to stoking confessional and political strife without shying away from direct military intervention in an effort to change governments of the MENA region perceived as unfriendly. Gen. Wesley Clark revealed in 2007 that American strategic planners were envisaging the need "to take out seven countries in five years, starting with Iraq, and then Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and, finishing off, Iran."[1] Although behind schedule, this program has largely been implemented, with Lebanon in a limbo and Iran under attack at the very moment of writing. That many of the territories subjected to intervention have turned into failed states and fragmented into areas of misery, mass displacement, tribal or sectarian division, and organized crime is not necessarily unwelcome from a geopolitical point of view.[2] In the Western geopolitical tradition, the "Middle East" appears to be an area on the geopolit-

1 "Gen. Wesley Clark Weighs Presidential Bid: 'I Think About It Every Day'," *Democracy Now*, March 2 (2007), accessed July 4, 2025, https://www.democracynow.org/2007/3/2/gen_wesley_clark_weighs_presidential_bid.

2 After the end of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya (*al-Jamāhīrīyah al-'Arabīyah al-Lībīyah*) in 2011, two presidential elections were scheduled but "experts and political analysts doubt the timing is right and believe a further postponement is necessary"; Karim Mezran, "Libya: the dilemma of the December elections," *Aspenia online*, November 25, 2021, accessed July 12, 2025, https://aspeniaonline.it/libya-the-dilemma-of-the-december-elections/. On February 3, 2026, Sayf al-Islām al-Qadhdhāfī, a probable presidential candidate, was assassinated by unknown gunmen.

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ical chessboard that has to fulfil a strategic purpose rather than being allowed to conduct a life in its own right and of its own volition.

Already in 1919, Halford Mackinder spun the idea that by dominating the rimlands of Eurasia it would be possible to "permanently penetrate the Heartland with oceanic freedom." He listed "Palestine, Syria, and Mesopotamia" among the countries that "must be internationalized in some manner" to achieve this laudable goal.[3] In 1997, Zbigniew Brzezinski extended this idea by declaring West Asia to be part of the "Eurasian Balkans," the outer ring of which was characterized by endemic instability and power vacuums, especially in the countries "located in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East."[4] This made them susceptible to being transformed into a geopolitical hotbed where the influence of rival powers had to be contained and American primacy affirmed to be further projected toward areas closer to the "Heartland."

Recently the implementation of this secular design has become more urgent as an increasing amount of financial and productive forces has begun sliding away from under the Western control, shifting toward South and East Asia, China, India and the other BRICS nations, and the Global South more generally. Securing the oil rich "Near/Middle East" has been

> a cornerstone of U.S. international economic power for a century, thanks to U.S. oil companies operating internationally (…) and remitting economic rents extracted from overseas to make a major contribution to the U.S. balance of payments. Control of Near Eastern oil also enables the dollar diplomacy that has seen Saudi Arabia and other OPEC countries invest their oil revenues into the U.S. economy by accumulating vast holdings of U.S. Treasury securities and private-sector investments.[5]

In the present situation, Iran and the southern Caucasus have become critical for the creation of trade routes and infrastructure developments. "If the United States can overthrow the Iranian government, this interrupts the long transportation corridor that China already has constructed and hopes to extend further West. Iran also is a key to blocking Russian trade and development via the Caspian Sea and access to the south, bypassing the Suez Canal."[6] Despite the numerous political changes the area has undergone in

3 Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality*, 215–16.

4 Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard*, 123–25.

5 Michael Hudson, "Why America is at War With Iran," *CounterPunch*, June 23, 2025, accessed June 27, 2025, https://www.counterpunch.org/2025/06/23/why-america-is-at-war-with-iran/.

6 Hudson, "Why America is at War With Iran."

the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, its strategic position still seems to fit Mackinderian categories from a Western point of view.

A larger timeframe may also help us situate other recent events. Several of the present Western geopolitical concerns, such as securing access to energy commodities and containing competitors, had already been adumbrated during the early days of the "Near/Middle East." At the time, there was no Israel yet, which confirms that Western interests extend beyond the "protection of Israel," an argument frequently used to legitimize Western military presence in the region. As we have seen from the sources presented in Chapter Five, at the time, the aspiring settlers promised to the Great Powers to act as Europe's "outpost" in the region. Indeed, the Zionist project arose from a pre-existing context of European efforts at settlement on, and domination of, the "other shore." When we read the present news that attacks against residents and their property in the occupied Palestinian territories continue in violation of international law, we should keep in mind the history and hierarchy among the forces in play;[7] the same holds true when we see on the TV screen how grueling measures of collective punishment are being inflicted on the population of the Gaza Strip; and when we learn that in a preliminary ruling the International Court of Justice considers plausible that these measures violate the "right of the Palestinians in Gaza to be protected from acts of genocide."[8] Efforts in the media to minimize the gravity of these acts and even criminalize their denunciation have been attributed, in particular, to Israel's longstanding influence over, if not control of, Western, and especially American, policy-making.

However, our long-term view of Mediterranean affairs suggests a different weighting of roles and responsibilities, one in which, on balance, American and European long-term strategic interests outweigh other factors. On November 17, 2025, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2803, which establishes "a transitional administration with international legal personality" for Gaza.[9] Various aspects of this framework evoke parallels with Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations. According to a former UN human rights

7 David Gritten and Yolande Knell, "Israel announces major expansion of settlements in occupied West Bank," *BBC*, May 29, 2025, accessed July 7, 2025, https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c1j5954edlno.

8 International Court Of Justice, *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip* (South Africa v. Israel), January 26, 2024, accessed June 5, 2025, https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20240126-sum-01-00-en.pdf.

9 United Nations Security Council, *Resolution 2803 (2025)*, accessed November 23, 2025, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4093207?v=pdf.

official, the relevant provisions incorporate "mechanisms of foreign occupation and colonial domination."[10] The mechanisms for the external administration of Gaza under American supervision that might be implemented following this decision, as well as the growing American-French oversight of Lebanese domestic affairs and almost permanent warfare in the region, appear to reinforce the return to an approach of open imperial dominance. Long before the relatively late and therefore seemingly anachronistic colonization of Palestine, imperial dominance had entailed "the dismemberment, displacement, and replacement of a native population"—at times with genocidal consequences.[11] European societies and colonial settlers had long demonstrated their capacity for such inhumanity, well before the advent of Zionism and independently of it. In early 2026, the American administration unapologetically heralded as a guiding principle for the future strategy of the United States the very legacy that has bound together "Western civilization" for more than 500 years: the legacy of settlement and conquest of foreign continents in order to "build vast empires extending out across the globe."[12]

Therefore, current events in the region can hardly be separated from the responsibility of American and European decision makers. As for the latter, this responsibility not only derives from the legacy of a colonial past but also from an imperial present that from time to time is openly supported by bizarre claims of civil and moral superiority.[13] Such claims seem to be part of "an

10 Craig Mokhiber, "The UN Embraces Colonialism: Unpacking the Security Council's mandate for the US colonial administration of Gaza," *Mondoweiss*, November 19, 2005, accessed November 23, 2025, https://mondoweiss.net/2025/11/the-un-embraces-colonialism-unpacking-the-security-councils-mandate-for-the-u-s-colonial-administration-of-gaza/.

11 Saul, *Imperialism*, 246.

12 Marco Rubio, *Secretary of State Marco Rubio at the Munich Security Conference: Remarks*. Hotel Bayerischer Hof, Munich, Germany, February 14, 2026, accessed February 22, 2026, https://www.state.gov/releases/office-of-the-spokesperson/2026/02/secretary-of-state-marco-rubio-at-the-munich-security-conference.

13 Ian Silvera, "Guy Verhofstadt: EU can become 'empire of the good' after Donald Trump's election," *International Business Times*, November 29, 2016, accessed January 14, 2017, https://www.ibtimes.co.uk/guy-verhofstadt-eu-will-be-empire-good-opposition-donald-trumps-america-1593862; see also Josep Borrell Fontelles' affirmation, "Yes, Europe is a garden (…) Most of the rest of the world is a jungle, and the jungle could invade the garden," in Diplomatic Service of the European Union, "European Diplomatic Academy: Opening remarks by High Representative Josep Borrell at the inauguration of the pilot programme," October 13, 2022, accessed July 21, 2025, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/european-diplomatic-academy-opening-remarks-high-representative-josep-borrell-inauguration-pilot_en.

ideological discourse that removes from view the history of colonialism and the way in which it continues to structure the present," as Ida Danewid writes. The discourse allows the European subject "to re-constitute itself as 'ethical' and 'good', innocent of its imperialist histories and present complicities."[14]

Europe's Mediterranean Policies

But what has become of European power politics? This is the main focus of the present book, after all. In Chapter Six we have tried to describe how, in the realm of Mediterranean geopolitics, the transition from European to American hegemony became blatantly obvious between 1956 and 1973. Since then, has a specifically European Mediterranean policy been able to reassert itself? The atmosphere of the 2025 NATO Summit in The Hague would rather suggest that European subalternity has only intensified.[15] Yet the historical trajectory that has led to this outcome has not been a straight line.

As mentioned in Chapter Six, after 1960, what remained of Eurafrican fantasies was translated by the European Economic Community (EEC) into association agreements with African states. Something similar holds for the EEC's Mediterranean policy, although initially only on a bilateral level, when association agreements were drawn with individual countries such as Türkiye in 1963, Israel in 1964, Lebanon in 1968, and Morocco and Tunisia in 1969. By proclaiming a Global Mediterranean Policy in the early 1970s, Brussels attempted for the first time to establish a general frame for Mediterranean policy and provide programmatic guidelines for further initiatives. The goals were to prevent geographical imbalances in the internal distribution of resources and competencies after the 1973 accession of Great Britain, Ireland, and Denmark; and to ensure the Community's energy security through partnerships with the MENA region. However, the ECC/EC Mediterranean policy continued to navigate in uncertain waters, in part because further enlargements of the community in more directions tended to blur its geographical focus.[16]

14 Ida Danewid, "White innocence in the Black Mediterranean: hospitality and the erasure of history," *Third World Quarterly* 38, no. 7 (2017): 1676.

15 Mary Bruce, Joseph Simonetti, and Emily Chang, "NATO secretary-general calls Trump 'Daddy'," *ABC News*, June 26, 2025, accessed July 4, 2025, https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/nato-secretary-general-calls-trump-daddy/story?id=123197665.

16 Filippos Pierros, Jacob Meunier, and Stan Abrams, *Bridges and Barriers: The European Union's Mediterranean Policy, 1961–1998* (Ashgate, 1999), 82–91.

The fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the *End of History* announced in 1992 reopened the door to more self-confident European Mediterranean initiatives.[17] The new situation seemed to offer the European Union and its member states a unique chance to regain a position of strength by expanding their markets and spheres of influence to the east and south. While Greece, Spain, and Portugal had joined the European Communities in the 1980s, Malta and Cyprus entered the EU in 2004 and Croatia in 2013. During the same period, the Union also expanded in Eastern and Northern Europe. Even Brzezinski seemed convinced that "at some point a truly united and powerful European Union could become a global political rival to the United States. It could certainly become a difficult economic-technological competitor, while its geopolitical interests in the Middle East and elsewhere could significantly diverge from those of America."[18]

A potential disagreement in the Western camp regarding the "Middle East" was a serious American concern. After the end of the USD's gold parity in 1971, this area had turned into something other than just a treasure trove of Anglo-American oil companies. Thanks to the Petrodollar arrangement, it had become, so to speak, the ultimate physical anchor place of the international financial system led by a fiat currency. If technically the U.S. dollar was no longer backed by any commodity, its reserve currency status was nonetheless supported by oil, thanks to the sustained injection of Petrodollars into the American financial system. Under similar circumstances, a major geopolitical "intrusion" to further markedly European interests could have undesirable effects. The author suggested keeping the Europeans busy in Central and Eastern Europe, because

> a wider Europe and an enlarged NATO will serve well both the short-term and the longer-term goals of U.S. policy. A larger Europe will expand the range of American influence – and, through the admission of new Central European members, also increase in the European councils the number of states with a pro-American proclivity – without simultaneously creating a Europe politically so integrated that it could soon challenge the United States on geopolitical matters of high importance to America elsewhere, particularly in the Middle East.[19]

17 Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (Free Press, 1992).

18 Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard*, 75.

19 Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard*, 199.

The distinction between an "old" Europe in the West, which, building on its past great power glories, aspired to greater independence from America, and a "new" Europe in the East, which willingly followed America's every rallying cry, played a crucial role during the Iraq War initiated in 2003.[20] It complicated European geopolitical interests and weakened the overall strength of EU initiatives.

Nevertheless, the attempts since the 1990s of single European countries and the CE/EU to regain influence on the "other" Mediterranean shore and reconstruct a more integrated "Mediterranean World" intensified. Evoking the importance of the Mediterranean was also a way of asserting national and regional interests within the dynamics of European integration. At the first Spanish-Italian Mediterranean Seminar in February 1991, the Spanish ambassador to Italy, Emilio Menéndez del Valle, made it clear that the aim was to prevent any "replacement of Southern Europe's protagonism" after Germany's reunification and the resulting shift of geopolitical focus. Southern Europe, he insisted, had to emphasize the importance of the Mediterranean for the whole of Europe and especially for its security.[21]

The Barcelona Process and the Union for the Mediterranean

It was primarily thanks to the initiative of Spain and Italy that the "Barcelona Process," later institutionalized under the name of Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP), was launched in 1995.[22] This partnership managed to include all EU member states, Mauritania, and all Mediterranean coastal countries except Libya, which held observer status. Its action, which had been agreed upon by the European countries among themselves, was grounded on three pillars: Political and Security Partnership, including "efforts toward democratization and the creation of pluralistic societies"; Economic and Financial Partnership; and Partnership in Social, Cultural, and Human Affairs. As displacement, impoverishment, and political persecution became virulent after

20 Petra Roter and Zlatko Šabič, "'New' and 'old Europe' in the context of the Iraq war and its implications for European security," *Perspectives on European Politics and Society* 5, no. 3 (2004): 517–42.

21 Embajada de España, *Primer Seminario Hispano-italiano sobre el Mediterráneo* (Instituto Español de Cultura, 1991), 13.

22 Michelle Pace, "Meddling or Muddling with the Mediterranean? French, Spanish and Italian Foreign Policy Making Towards the 'South'," in *EU and the Mediterranean: Foreign Policy and Security*, ed. Peter Seeberg (University Press of Southern Denmark, 2007), 126–34.

the start of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, a new focus area was added on Migration, Social Integration, Justice, and Security in 2005.[23]

In a parallel development, the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) came to life in the wake of the EU's initial enlargements in Eastern Europe and offered spaces for bilateral agreements between the EU and individual third countries,[24] some of which were already in the waiting room for EU accession. While the EU kept Turkish accession in limbo, it outright refuted any possibility of membership for its Arab neighbors after Morocco's application to the European Community was rejected in 1987.[25] Non-EU members of the EMP were invited to participate instead in the ENP partnership scheme. At the time, France and the other southern EU members—including Malta and Cyprus—argued that the EU's geographic expansion should not divert too many resources to the north and to the east.

In May 2007, Nicolas Sarkozy proposed a new structure that would comprise the European and Arab Mediterranean states plus Türkiye. The president-elect of France declared in his acceptance speech that he intended

> to reach out to all people of the Mediterranean to tell them that everything will unfold in the Mediterranean. That we must overcome all the hatred and leave in its place the great dream of peace and the great dream of civilization. I want to tell them that the time has come to build at its center a Mediterranean Union, that will [be the link between] Europe and Africa. What was done for Europe 60 years ago, we will do today for a Mediterranean Union.[26]

Sarkozy's presentation seemed to serve several purposes, from the reassessment of French leadership in the realm of Mediterranean policy to the creation of southern counterweights to the EU's increasing eastward orientation and the obstruction of Türkiye's EU-membership ambitions. It appeared to offer the Turks an alternative "Union" to adhere to, an idea that the Turkish government rejected. "Only Morocco and Egypt showed interest, likely due to their dependence on European financial aid as resource-poor states."[27] The Libyan leader Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhāfī publicly denounced the project as a

23 Benjamin Heese, *Die Union für das Mittelmeer. Zwei Schritte vor, einer zurück?* (LIT Verlag, 2009), 24–25.

24 One such example is the EU-Egyptian Association Agreement of 2001; see *EG-Ägypten Europa-Mittelmeer-Abkommen* (Bundesagentur für Außenwirtschaft, 2003).

25 Werner Weidenfeld, editor's introduction to *Herausforderung Mittelmeer: Aufgaben, Ziele und Strategien europäischer Politik* (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 1992), 52–53.

26 Dimitrios Triantaphyllou, "Toward a new EU approach," *The Bridge* 6, no. 3 (2007): 69.

27 Heese, *Die Union für das Mittelmeer*, 45.

peril for the African Union and the Arab League. This was three years before his violent death in an insurgency backed by the bombers of a U.S.-British-French coalition, with Sarkozy, the visionary of Mediterranean peace, at Palais de l'Élysée.[28] Sarkozy's decision to promote the NATO-led attack on Libya was driven by the goal of strengthening the French economic and military presence in North and Central Africa, blocking al-Qadhdhāfī's plans for a gold-based pan-African currency, and gaining "a greater share of Libya[n] oil production."[29]

After complex negotiations—first with Spain and Italy, then within EU institutions—France succeeded in having the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) established by the European Council in 2008, although relatively little was left of Sarkozy's original design. The new Union looked more like a potentiated version of the EMP, the membership, policies, and institutions of which it inherited while enlarging the focus toward new priorities such as migration, energy security, and environmental protection. A major innovation was the creation of a parity-based Euro-Mediterranean Secretariat with organizational competencies, in which the southern and eastern Mediterranean partner states and the EU members were equally represented.

Economic Partnership and the Irrepressible Spirit of *Erschließung*

Economic cooperation under the EMP/UfM framework took a manifestly asymmetric shape. The EU decided the priorities, offered financing, and encouraged partner countries to adapt to its own legal and technical standards. European direct investment was supposed to be attracted by market reforms, tax incentives, subsidies, and the privatization of state-owned enterprises in the Arab partner countries. However, "resource-rich states like Algeria were unwilling to accept imposed reforms," whereas "Tunisia and Morocco rely so heavily on EU aid that they consistently adhere to its demands."[30] The EU pushed for trade liberalization and tried to extend the 2004 Agadir Free Trade Agreement with Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia, and Morocco to other countries. "Yet the EU's hypocrisy is evident – while demanding free trade, it heavily subsidizes and protects its own agricultural market." The Europeans also

28 Prashad, *Arab Spring, Libyan Winter*, 131, 170.

29 House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, *Libya: Examination of Intervention and Collapse and The UK's Future Policy Options. Third Report of Session 2016–17* (House of Commons, 2016), 10–11.

30 Heese, *Die Union für das Mittelmeer*, 30, 67.

restricted labor mobility and blocked trade liberalization in the textiles and services sectors that could have benefitted exporters from Arab partner states. The North African countries, which were living through a period of exceptionally dynamic demographic growth and huge youth unemployment, "only have the chance to export raw materials – if available – for further processing abroad." It was as if the basic neocolonial equation of economic relations with North Africa had barely changed. Unsurprisingly, the prosperity gap between the EU and its southern neighbors widened in the early 2000s.[31]

On the European side, even the spirit of *Erschließung* seemed unbroken. One example is the Mediterranean Solar Plan Project Preparation Initiative (MSP-PPI). Sustained by the European Investment Bank (EIB), the European Commission, and the UfM, it sought to forward the implementation of renewable energy in Mediterranean partner countries. The plan "originated in Germany and was expanded through a Franco-German initiative." It was meant to offer "major economic opportunities for Germany's world-leading solar companies, though they require legal security for investments."[32]

Looking at a map "of possible infrastructure for a sustainable supply of power to Europe, the Middle East and North Africa" drawn by the Desertec Foundation around 2011, one is reminded of the grandiose transport and energy networks proposed by Chevalier, Sörgel, Theens, or Labonne.[33] Desertec has so far overseen the implementation of single projects within and beyond the "wider Mediterranean," but the original plan has reckoned with major obstacles, not only due to competition from oil and gas companies but also because of the norms and rules of the neo-liberal age. Unlike in the days of Sörgel or Labonne, articles 101–109 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) make it hard for a public administration to run risky, innovative, and therefore perhaps not immediately profitable industrial projects directly. Not even the exemption of "natural monopoles" from "market rules," typical for the era of classical liberalism, is accepted without a number of legal restrictions. Private investors, on the other hand, remain reluctant in the absence of short-term gains and long-term guarantees against political and legal risks such as terrorism or nationalization.[34] The cautious stance of potential producer countries "on the opposite shore" has been attributed to

31 Heese, *Die Union für das Mittelmeer*, 27, 43, 71.

32 Heese, *Die Union für das Mittelmeer*, 59, 66.

33 Desertec, *Sketch of possible infrastructure for a sustainable supply of power to Europe, the Middle East and North Africa*, 2011, accessed July 22, 2025, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:DESERTEC-Map_large.jpg.

34 Desertec Foundation, *Information*, accessed July 22, 2025, https://desertec.org/en/information/.

their political immaturity, in particular "the inability of Maghreb governments to cooperate in economic or political questions" among themselves. One concern was that "the promise to earn huge amounts of money with the export of electric energy to Europe could even reinforce rivalries."[35] Like Chevalier's railroads and Sörgel's hydro-electric power stations, the spirit of *Erschließung* does not lie in a technology that, under the control of producer countries, could potentiate their own manufacturing capacities. Rather, it lies in the apparent priority of securing renewable energy for Europe.

Democratization and the Infiltration of Civil Society

The Political and Security Partnership, placed at the top of the priority list in 1995, was frequently torpedoed by tensions that continued to spill over from the Palestine conflict and US-led military interventions. When the EU countries tried to impose their view of terrorism, they were confronted with the claim of Arab countries to recognize the legitimate right of armed resistance against occupation, which "Israel and the EU firmly rejected." The European concept of political partnership foresaw that Arab countries should democratize their authoritarian political systems in favor of a "plural society." The idea was to make "aid" conditional on "reforms" and to sanction reluctant governments by reducing or denying them funding. Because "linking financial aid to political goals is viewed critically in Mediterranean third countries," the carrot-and-stick approach had only limited reach and could easily become counterproductive. As some observers warned, the political conditioning of aid was better not overplayed, as "too much democracy introduced too quickly could lead to instability, empowering Islamist fundamentalists, even by means of elections. This is why engaging reform-oriented actors is crucial, although the EU has yet to find suitable partners."[36]

Their problem with democracy was apparently that it not only needed elections but it also needed the "right" winners; the societal anchorage of the liberal and academic elites who were the preferred partners of European cooperation was evidently too limited to obtain the desired result.[37] This dilemma led to reducing the pressure put on "authoritarian regimes" and with it the

35 Delf Rothe, "Welcome to the Desert: Regional Integration and Identity Change through EU-MENA Partnership?," in *Euro-Mediterranean Relations after the Arab Spring*, ed. Jakob Horst, Annette Jünemann, and Delf Rothe, 184–203 (Ashgate, 2013), 196.

36 Heese, *Die Union für das Mittelmeer*, 25, 31, 33.

37 Heese, *Die Union für das Mittelmeer*, 28.

Political and Security component of European partnership policies, allocating a "relatively small amount of democracy assistance, which the EU sends to the Mediterranean" and looking instead for alternative ways to reach the goal of policy change.[38] Apparently European policymakers never considered—let alone tolerated—the idea of a symmetrically inverse political interference from the other side, while by their own ideological standards, extending Europe's "universal values" to the neighborhood and the rest of the world was not only justified but a moral duty. Beneath all of the changes in language and procedure, it is hard not to recognize a certain similarity with the geophilosophical posture that had already presided over the birth of the "Mediterranean World." When Napoleon opened his campaign of colonial conquest in Egypt in 1798, he framed it as the liberation of the Egyptians from their Mamluk tyrants—or perhaps we should say the Mamluks' "authoritarian regime." A no less self-righteous posture has earned the European Union several critiques from the Arab side.[39]

As most southern and southeastern Mediterranean governments have resisted "reform pressure," one alternative way to go was enhancing the Social, Cultural and Human Partnership program. A key development in this sector was the creation, in 2005, of the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for Dialogue Between Cultures (ALF), which is an intergovernmental body tasked with linking civil society groups, institutions, and governments. It enabled EU-funded NGOs to build a "network through the *Euromed Platform*, established in 2005, whose perspectives are incorporated into Barcelona Process decisions via [NGO] representatives in the Euro-Med Committee. The aim is to cultivate domestic demands for reform, thereby pressuring authoritarian regimes."[40] The Intercultural Dialogue "rapidly achieved a priority position on the Euro-Mediterranean agenda."[41]

In their efforts, ALF—which managed to connect more than 4,000 civil society organizations in the Euro-Mediterranean area—was not alone. A number of national foundations, NGOs, and philanthropic organizations—such as the German Heinrich Böll Foundation or the United Kingdom Conflict, Stability and Security Fund, along with the National Endowment for Democracy and

38 Helle Malmvig, "Cooperation, Reform or Dialogue: the EU's Ambivalent Security Discourses in the Mediterranean," in *EU and the Mediterranean: Foreign Policy and Security*, ed. Peter Seeberg (University Press of Southern Denmark, 2007), 89.

39 Hani Habeeb, *Le partenariat euro-méditerranéen: Apports et limites. Le point de vue arabe* (Éditions Publisud, 2002), 42–43.

40 Heese, *Die Union für das Mittelmeer*, 28.

41 Pietro de Pierini, *Intercultural Dialogue in EU Foreign Policy: The Case of the Mediterranean from the End of the Cold War to the Arab Uprisings* (Routledge, 2018), 15.

other U.S. organizations—were massively present in the "MENA Region" to sustain so-called grassroots initiatives among civil society and youth. Their opportunities were enhanced by the rapid growth of social media in the early 2000s, especially among young people. Social media would then play a critical role during the Arab Spring.[42] It is nonetheless possible that "the majority of the international actors involved in the region" were "initially taken by surprise by the events of early 2011," if we consider that many of the grievances of Arab youth were caused by high unemployment rates and a depressing outlook, as well as other issues and claims, not all of which were included in the EU reform decalogue. But ALF, nonetheless, "took the opportunity to demonstrate to EU leaders the successful work it had carried out since its establishment in 2005, and its overall ability to engage the civil society of the Mediterranean region."[43]

The immediate impact of the Arab Spring uprisings on the implementation of the EU's Neighbourhood Programmes in countries like Morocco and Tunesia was mixed, as the unexpected "new window of opportunity to promote reforms" was counterbalanced by "growing instability and the subsequent turnover within the ranks of the administration," which "left the EU without clear interlocutors."[44] But the EU became even more convinced by the events of the crucial importance of civil society work for enhancing and guiding "democratic transition." In 2011, the European Council "formally praised the ALF for its useful work towards the substantial stepping-up of the new partnership of the EU with 'societies', especially in Syria, Egypt and Libya"[45]—with Egypt in balance and Libya and Syria moved to the top of the western regime-change agenda.

The fear of "Islamization" in case of overhasty democratization, which was uttered by various European observers, sounds duplicitous in many ways. On the one hand, the principle targets of Western intervention were secular nationalist "authoritarian regimes," which were mainly undermined by the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamist organizations. On the other hand, the principle sponsors of "Islamization" in the region, the wealthy Gulf monarchies, were rarely bothered with equally pressing Western demands for

42 de Pierini, *Intercultural Dialogue*, 160; Fadi Salem and Racha Mourtada, "Civil Movements: The Impact of Facebook and Twitter," *Arab Social Media Report* 1, no. 2 (2011): 1–29.

43 de Pierini, *Intercultural Dialogue*, 160, 189; see also, Gemma Aubarell, "Intercultural Trends and Social Change in the Euro-Mediterranean Region," *Quaderns de la Mediterrània* 22 (2015): 64.

44 Iole Fontana, *EU Neighbourhood Policy in the Maghreb: Implementing the ENP in Tunesia and Morocco Before and After the Arab Uprisings* (Routledge, 2017), 54–55.

45 de Pierini, *Intercultural Dialogue*, 160.

democratization. Moreover, the cutback of social expenditure, the dismantling of state-run economic activity, and the "market-friendly reforms" so vividly recommended to partner countries by their European neighbors also tended to strengthen the well-organized Islamic sector in both the for-profit and non-profit areas of the economy, as well as in civil society.[46] This is the local population's prerogative to support or reject, but it also highlights another inconsistency in Europe's Mediterranean discourse.

Migrants and Borders: A "Wider" Mediterranean, Again

In the last three decades, migration, more than any other issue, has led to a polarized perception of the "Mediterranean World." One part of the European public feels pressurized by the human drama of migrants, who cross the sea risking and often losing their lives, to extend a protective shield in favor of migrants that stretches over the sea and into West Asia and North Africa. Another part perceives migration as a threat and calls for keeping "illegal migrants" away from the fortress and out of the Mediterranean moat. Their claim also implies the extension of a protective shield but one aimed at protecting "European border security."

The present use of the Mediterranean Sea as a migration route, now running from the east to the west and from the south to the north, is caused by a plurality of factors, the most frequently quoted of which is demography: "Because the number of offspring declined earlier here than anywhere else, Europe is now the demographically oldest of all continents. It will be the first to experience a decline in both the working-age and total population. It is also located in the immediate vicinity of Africa and the Middle East, the regions with the highest population growth rates in the world."[47] The geographical asynchrony of demographic cycles is a valid point. It should, however, be added that, in the long run, population patterns are influenced by economic developments, which became increasingly uneven since industrialization started in Europe some 250 years ago. The consequences of uneven development have been amplified by the economics of colonialism and neocolonialism, which prevented even commodity-rich countries in Africa and

46 Cengiz Günay, "EuroMed Relations: Why the EU Needs to Consider Different Shapes and Concepts Beyond Established Western Normative Orders," *Quaderns de la Mediterrània* 22 (2015): 28–29.

47 Reiner Klingholz and Stephan Sievert, *Krise an Europas Südgrenze. Welche Faktoren steuern heute und morgen die Migration über das Mittelmeer?* (Institut für Bevölkerung und Entwicklung, 2014), 6.

Asia from capital formation, industrialization, and the related social transformation, which in turn influences procreation.

Uneven development translated into factor-cost biases that almost inevitably would trigger new migration flows. The size of these flows is not even in proportion with the order of magnitude of the labor income biases. Largely unknown to Eurocentric perception, an estimated half of labor migrants move between different countries of the Global South rather than heading north. In Europe, the convenience of wage dumping and the concern for prospective labor shortages have induced the capital side to favor "regulated immigration" and oppose the idea of a "fortress," because "Europe urgently needs young workers."[48] Understandably, workers struggle to feel the same urge to feed additional low-cost labor into the labor market. Because unions and labor movements seem to have given up on defending class interest on similar issues, widespread dissatisfaction easily plays into the hand of xenophobic forces and helps to transform "the Muslim" into a scapegoat.

At the beginning of the 1990s, trans-Mediterranean labor migration to Western Europe began to exceed demand, in part because it had to compete with well-trained East European workers—for the most part light-skinned Christians. "It is clearly perceived that the extra-European flows of immigrants, whether they come from the southern shore of the Mediterranean or from Sub-Saharan Africa, come from Muslim societies." Against the background of armed conflicts in the "Middle East" and terrorist attacks at home, the question was raised, yet again, of the "relations that Europe ought to maintain with Islam."[49]

In the following years, European Mediterranean partnership policies have increasingly shifted their focus to border security and migration control. In the public imaginary, human trafficking, shipwrecks, and deaths by drowning have transformed the Mediterranean into a graveyard. Against the backdrop of heated disputes between EU member states over admission quotas, asylum procedures, and freedom of movement within the Schengen area, the southern and eastern EU borders and their control have become a matter of supranational competencies, particularly through the establishment of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex). Thanks to bilateral agreements with partners from the MENA region and beyond, Europe has shifted its south-

48 Heese, *Die Union für das Mittelmeer*, 39.

49 Nadi Safir, "The Question of Migration," in *Maelstrom. The United States, Southern Europe, and the Challenges of the Mediterranean*, ed. John W. Holmes (World Peace Foundation, 1995), 65–66.

ern border for migrants not just to the Mediterranean Sea but deep into African territory.

Several partnership agreements foresee that Southern Mediterranean partner countries host European facilities that process asylum claims and visa requests locally, with the result that an applicant has de facto minor chances of opposing a rejection, as the rules of the host country also come into play. "EUrope's neighbours are, in other words, becoming EUrope's policemen."[50] In this way, legal guarantees that are on the book in European countries can de facto be altered if not suspended. The expectations of EU countries that lament an excess of illegal immigration are understood by their partner countries as an incentive to harshen their own migration and visa rules. In Libya, for example, "government crackdowns and wide-scale imprisonment of migrants began soon after Italy started to return migrants to Libya," which has provoked a severe deterioration in living and working conditions of migrants in the country. The unintended result was that even migrants residing in Libya for years without intending to go elsewhere now feel urged to pay a smugglers' gang and climb on their boat.[51]

The "new – and increasingly explicit – role envisioned for EUrope's neighbours in its border-work foregrounds" suggests considering "the EU's bordering activities as part of a broader attempt to 'translate' the EUropean space by re-making the world beyond it."[52] And the "world beyond it" not only extends to African territory but also to the sea itself. According to a Frontex naval officer versed in international maritime law, the handling of migrant boats on the high sea is situated in a grey zone of both international and national laws that allows for a certain arbitrariness.[53] With the previous chapters of this book in mind, we may describe the whole process as yet another metamorphosis of the "wider Mediterranean" and its intentionally vague borderlines, wherein some Other has to be reined in and "included" under European control.

On balance, the EU border and migration policy has not been entirely unsuccessful. Not only has it shifted part of the related problems beyond the sea and out of sight of public opinion, but thanks to new detention practices that migrants are subjected to under the extended protective shield, the bun-

50 Luiza Białasiewicz, "Off-shoring and Out-sourcing the Borders of EUrope: Libya and EU Border Work in the Mediterranean," *Geopolitics* 17, no. 4 (2012): 847.

51 Silja Klepp, *Negotiating the Principle of Non-Refoulement in the Mediterranean Sea: Missions, Visions and Policies at the Southern Border of the European Union* (Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2008), 11–13.

52 Białasiewicz, "Off-shoring and Out-sourcing," 847–48.

53 Klepp, *Negotiating the Principle*, 15.

dle of provisions has led to "the 'deceleration' of migrant movements, the regulation of the timing of their entry and the circulation of labour."[54] For the ambitions of Euro-Mediterranean integration as a whole, however, the migration issue has been rather detrimental. Since the first decade of the millennium, "a shift in rhetoric – from democratisation and collaboration to securitisation" – could be observed.[55] After 2011, when "the momentum of the Arab Spring faltered," the EU's concerns have switched to migration and security, which has led to the creation of "a common containment-based Euro-Mediterranean security space" that has altered "the original spirit of the EMP." In the process, partner countries have come to resent the fact that "the migration agenda is set by the EU and not Arab states' priority."[56]

When "more than a million migrants and refugees crossed into Europe" in 2015, the problem seemed to spiral out of control. The overwhelming numbers of people heading toward Europe—and particularly Germany—were accompanied by another record, that of people drowning or otherwise dying while crossing the sea. Approximately two-thirds of the 2015 refugees came from just three countries: Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq.[57] The geographic pattern of the refugees' origin attests to how U.S.-led military interventions and fomented civil wars can overshadow demographic and economic push factors. According to an estimate by Brown University, "the eight most violent wars the U.S. military has launched or participated in since 2001 — in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Pakistan, the Philippines, Somalia, Syria and Yemen — have produced 8 million refugees and asylum seekers and 29 million internally displaced people" [27.3 million without the Philippines].[58] War as a main cause of the refugee crisis leads back to the to the topic of European–American relations, which highlights the degree of European subalternity. The invaded countries themselves and their direct neighbors undoubtedly bore the brunt, with a human and social cost dramatically increased by millions of perished and maimed people. But thanks to the refugee waves across land routes and the

54 Silja Klepp, *Europa zwischen Grenzkontrolle und Flüchtlingsschutz. Eine Ethnographie der Seegrenze auf dem Mittelmeer* (transcript, 2011), 402.

55 Białasiewicz, "Off-shoring and Out-sourcing," 846.

56 Richard Youngs, "The long retreat from Euro-Mediterranean Integration," *IEMed Focus* 154, no. 3 (2019): 5.

57 [Anonymous], "Migrant crisis: Migration to Europe explained in seven charts," *BBC News*, March 4, 2016, accessed July 25, 2025, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34131911.

58 David Vine, "Millions displaced by US combat since 9/11," *Responsible Statecraft*, September 8, 2020, accessed July 25, 2025, https://responsiblestatecraft.org/2020/09/08/millions-displaced-by-us-combat-since-9-11/.

Mediterranean Sea, considerable social costs, political conflicts, and security problems were also handed to America's European allies.

Déjà-vus and Anachronism of the "Mediterranean World"

Humboldt's and Ritter's "passage west" remains deeply ingrained in the European geographical mind. It has backed Europe's worldwide colonial expansion as well as the progressing reversal of the Euro-Atlantic balance of power after the American Revolution. In the process, the "West" has increasingly gone beyond its earlier meaning as the opposite of an Orientalized "East." While in former semantics "the West" and "Europe" largely coincided, since the nineteenth century, the expression increasingly signaled a difference in meaning to just "Europe."[59] After the Second World War the reversal of power relations definitely reached the Mediterranean, where U.S. hegemony supplanted the European one. In the following decades, European interests have retreated even further, whenever they proved incompatible with American objectives. In recent years, in the aftermath of a number of military interventions, "the failure of U.S. Middle East policy negatively impacted Europe's Mediterranean policy, as Europe is still seen as part of the 'West'."[60] There was little that Europe was willing and able to do to refute such an impression.

In the meantime, the European Union has found a new mission to fulfil in the Mediterranean, the Levant, and Africa: containing Russia. The consequences of this new concern are not free of an ironic reminiscence of past power intrigues, the search for help from an "old friend" that is not exactly considered a friend included. Among other iniquities, the unruliest NATO member, Türkiye, has been accused of extending its continental shelf to the detriment of its EU neighbors, both to lay claim on possible gas deposits and to impose its "maritime dominance" on the Eastern Mediterranean.[61] But when it comes to "reducing Russia's footprint," the "cooperation with Türkiye (within or, given the recent geopolitical shifts, outside the NATO framework)" is considered crucial.[62]

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59 Georgios Varouxakis, *The West: The History of an Idea* (Princeton University Press, 2025), 2–3.

60 Heese, *Die Union für das Mittelmeer*, 64.

61 Christian Schaller, *Streit im östlichen Mittelmeer – Griechenland, Türkei, Zypern: Eine seevölkerrechtliche Einordnung* (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, 2022), 5.

62 Katarzyna Sidło, "The Southern Mediterranean: Reducing Russia's footprint in the post-Assad era," in *Unpowering Russia: How the EU can counter and undermine the Kremlin,* ed. Ondrej Ditrych and Steven Everts (EU Institute for Security Studies, 2025), 33–39.

In Africa, the same mission involves not only the partner countries of the Maghreb and Egypt but also those of Sahel, Sudan, and Central Africa.[63] Although the new priority belongs to the realm of geostrategy rather than border security and migration, the geographic dimensions of both are superimposed on the issue. In this area, NATO countries envisage a certain military presence to combat human trafficking and terrorism. With their focus on "'cross-border dynamics', including security spillovers from the Sahel region," memories of similar ways of geographic description of the past come to mind.[64]

First, the drawing of lines that ought to distinguish the Mediterraneanized Maghrebin coast from outer layers of hinterland, which, layer after layer, descend into the desert and beyond, strongly resembles earlier versions of the "wider Mediterranean." The reviewed ENP "is precisely the EU outreach to the neighbors of partners ('neighbors of neighbors'). In the context of North Africa, the intention is to expand engagement to countries of the Sahel and sub-Saharan Africa."[65] This approach recalls the concentric half-circles that, under various names and shapes, have been drawn since Büsching and Krause to account for the geographical "widening" of the Mediterranean toward the south.

The second is that of Zeune's sea of sand, which Braudel called the *autre Méditerranée*, a space of nomadic anarchy that denotes traits similar to those of pirate-infested international waters and symbolizes at the same time the sinister geographical opposite of "Mediterranean civilization." According to Paolo Quercia, who calls this area an "African vacuum," the desert resembles maritime spaces that likewise have "no sovereignty and low or no governance." Presently, it extends deep into the Sahel and is expanding further north into the Maghreb, in particular Libya, "gravitating toward the international waters of the Central Mediterranean." It is a "sea of sand where global interconnections are transforming traditional anarchy, freedom and tribal sovereignty, often the only form of organized control over territory, into global gangsterism."[66]

Where the "wider Mediterranean" meets the "other Mediterranean," recalling a third familiar figure of speech is almost inevitable: down there is "Africa

63 Reflection Group, *NATO 2030: United for a New Era* (NATO, 2020), 16–18.

64 Emiliano Alessandri, *The New EU Global Strategy and What It Means for Morocco* (OCP Policy Center, 2016), 5.

65 Alessandri, *The New EU Global Strategy*, 5–6.

66 Paolo Quercia, "Migrating in the global vacuum: how globalization has securitized regional market migration flows," in *Mediterranean Migration and the Labour Markets*, ed. Salvatore Capasso and Eugenia Ferragina (Routledge, 2020), 13.

proper," up here is something else. According to Emiliano Alessandri, it "is undoubtedly in the connections between the Southern Mediterranean rim and the African heartland that phenomena that have engulfed the EU, such as migration, can be better understood and tackled."[67] The African "heartland" resembles Krause's Africa "in its proper meaning" and sets it apart from the Mediterraneanized coastland, which, according to Pinon, is "African only by name." Apparently, a geographical distinction once functional to the government of the *Empire de la Méditerranée* is still relevant for the implementation of neighborhood and security policies by the European Union.

In keeping with the litany of metaphors and tropes of the Mediterranean mythologeme, Nicholas Sarkozy resorted to the concept of "civilization" in his 2007 address to explain both the unity and uniqueness of the Mediterranean region and its world-historical significance as a future haven of peace. In this way, he emphasized how Europe's already realized utopias should be extended geographically to benefit the surrounding Mediterranean humanity. But the architecture of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership "was negotiated in Brussels, mostly without consulting Mediterranean third countries."[68] After all, Napoleon's, Hegel's, and Humboldt's "Mediterranean World" had not been shaped in accord with the rulers, philosophers, and geographers of the Ottoman and Moroccan Sultanates either. The latter had been confronted with a fait accompli that resulted from an intra-European intellectual negotiation. The exchange and dialogue through which "different cultures should be accepted, forging a collective Mediterranean cultural heritage and a unifying Euro-Mediterranean identity" were always meant to proceed according to a previously established European agenda.[69]

Historically, the "Mediterranean World" was an attempt at region-building intended to serve European interests and desires for dominion. Presently, the EU's Intercultural Dialogue is likewise "an instrument of region-building and identity formation, towards the construction of a feeling of 'Mediterraneanness', and as a precondition of reaching the ambitious goals pursued by the EU in that area."[70] Evidently, the didactic zeal and paternalistic attitude toward the Other live on, whether they concern political institutions, human rights, social values, or moral attitudes. The idea that one might also learn something from the Other rarely occurs, unless it is for picking up a tasty "ethnic" recipe

67 Alessandri, *The New EU Global Strategy*, 5.
68 Heese, *Die Union für das Mittelmeer*, 43.
69 Heese, *Die Union für das Mittelmeer*, 27.
70 de Pierini, *Intercultural Dialogue*, 11.

that Europeans then allow themselves to declare part of an imaginary "Mediterranean cuisine."

In Europe's geographical mind, the Mediterranean has frequently floated back and forth between contact and conflict, as Ratzel had put it. The romantic fantasy of classical beauty, wealth, sunshine, and happy cultural hybridity notwithstanding, the nomad, the steppe, the "Mohammedan," the "Semite," and the "wild beasts of Mankind" have continued to lurk in the background. Once advancing on pirate ships and in the sultan's armies, now they lurk in the palaces of despots and run regime dungeons, oppress women, and send out rubber boats packed with undocumented refugees who begin to conspire in occult gatherings after being rescued.[71] Under the impression created by terroristic attacks in European cities and warfare abroad, the sea has floated back once again from representing a space of encounter and dialogue to the spatial epitome of contrast and conflict.

To be a "world" of its own, the Mediterranean must be set apart from the rest of the globe by some kind of singularity. In the academic field, the last important, and rather circumspect, attempt to describe it as a world of possible encounter was put forth by Horden and Purcell at the turn of the twenty-first century. However, their unity-in-complexity approach struggles to set this "world" apart as its qualifying moment, connectivity, is ubiquitous rather than unique. Outside the academic realm, the geopolitical sea change has given the upper hand to those who claim that, if the Mediterranean has any singularity at all, it consists in its being exceptionally confrontational: "No other world space, no other intercontinental sea is facing so many interconnected challenges and confronting such a variety of instability and threats. Threats that are concentrating and incubating in this fragile 'Sea between lands', posing a new set of challenges and asymmetric risks to the coastal countries."[72] As Zeune, Vidal de la Blache, Braudel, and others have already underlined, the continents—geographic symbols of the good and evil forces in history—take the Mediterranean in their grip like no other place. In doing so, they confirm that it is *a* world that also represents *the* world by reflecting world history within itself.

According to Richard Youngs, all in all EU-Mediterranean relations have moved "away from deep-seated integration to a logic of uneasy co-existence and containment. Part of the explanation lies within the EU itself as the bloc

71 For an example of unironically concerned commentary, see Konrad Seitz, "Re-Islamisierung als Gefahr," in *Herausforderung Mittelmeer: Aufgaben, Ziele und Strategien europäischer Politik*, ed. Werner Weidenfeld (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 1992), 155.

72 Quercia, "Migrating in the global vacuum," 9.

has become more defensive, brittle and weak."[73] Perhaps it is true that the "process of de-structuring of the Mediterranean geopolitical space was clearly evident" already in 2008, "when the Euro-Mediterranean Union was launched."[74] Yet, in the following years, the usual tropes and metaphors of the Mediterranean mythologeme have continued to be applied to that same geopolitical space. The anachronism of this practice lies in the expectation that it may continue to function as a geophilosophical cover for European power in the same way it did in the past. This cloak is, however, increasingly turning out to be an empty hull.

Perhaps the narrative is driven on by a hope in the magic power of words and images to overcome the factual shift in global economic and geopolitical balances somehow. Or is it driven by inertia and a lack of fantasy? Or is it driven by the denial of the need to adjust the narrative to the reality of declining European strength? Some might reply that there is no such decline, as the West has succeeded even in recent years in removing several "adversaries" from the "other shore." But what has happened and is happening at the time of writing looks more like a success fraught with sinister omens. At any rate, for many decades European power politics has been enabled to manifest itself only within the perimeter granted to it by an American hegemony that, in the foreseeable future, may perhaps be approaching its own limits.

73 Youngs, "The long retreat," 5.

74 Quercia, "Migrating in the global vacuum," 9.

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