

5 'Europe from Afar'

A Poetic History of the Jewish Mediterranean

Dario Miccoli

'As Levantines, we instinctively searched for fruitful compromises, feeling as we did that the end of colonial occupation solved nothing fundamental unless Western concepts were at work in this awakening world, transforming its very soul. We knew that Europe, although far away, was inseparably part of us, because it had so much to offer'.¹ The author of these lines is Jacqueline Shoheit Kahanoff. Born in Cairo in 1917 into a well-off family of Tunisian and Iraqi-Jewish ancestry, she emigrated in the 1950s to the State of Israel, where she died in 1979. Kahanoff – who has been rediscovered in recent years as a pioneer of the Levant and the 'Mediterranean idea' – was describing the feeling of close proximity to Europe that she and her schoolmates experienced while growing up in the cosmopolitan atmosphere of interwar Cairo. Europe, no matter how distant and different from the country by the Mediterranean sea in which she lived, was 'part of us', Kahanoff recalled. In fact Europe represented a space that, at times, made her feel like a stranger in Egypt, which by contrast seemed to be a world that was just 'awakening'.

As the quotation suggests, many compromises and borders existed in the (Jewish) Mediterranean into which Kahanoff had been born and between the latter and the European worlds that surrounded it. However, it is also true that from late antiquity to the modern era, cultural and socio-economic exchanges across the Mediterranean region were frequent, and the southern and eastern shores of this sea, in particular, became central spaces in Jewish history.² Moreover, despite occasional clashes and episodes of anti-Jewish violence, the Jews of North Africa and the Middle East had lived for centuries in territories whose population was largely composed of (Muslim) Arabs, and their life generally was less troubled than that of the Jews of Europe. With the advent of modernity – and following late eighteenth-century Sephardi declensions of the *Haskalah* ('Jewish Enlightenment') – the Mediterranean came to embody something more ambivalent, where ideas both unknown and familiar to the Jews circulated, particularly from the European shore towards North Africa, Egypt, and the Levant.³ Thus, when viewed from cities like nineteenth-century Tunis or Cairo, the northern shore of the Mediterranean was often perceived as a space from where

DOI: 10.4324/9781003083641-6

troubling identity paradigms might come: namely assimilation and a rather rigid separation, alien to the history of the Jews of the Arab world and to that of the Ottoman Empire more generally, between religious observance and secularism.⁴ At the same time, European powers – which by the early twentieth century were clearly established as the region's colonisers – were also ameliorating their juridical, social, and cultural status. Consider the case of Algeria, where the Jews were naturalised *en masse* as French in 1870 through the Crémieux decree or that of the emergence of a Jewish middle class in colonial Alexandria and Cairo.⁵

From the late 1920s, however, as the Jewish migration to British Palestine intensified, so too did relations between Jews and Arabs worsen. The radicalisation of the Middle Eastern political arena in the 1930s, and the growing importance of Islamic movements like the Muslim Brotherhood, founded in Egypt in 1929, slowly led to the marginalisation of the Jewish population. At the same time, Zionism began to seem increasingly attractive, especially to the younger generation.⁶ With the outbreak of the Second World War, some Jews living in countries that fell under Nazi occupation, like Tunisia, or came to be controlled by Vichy France, like Algeria and Morocco, were interned in prison camps in the Maghreb. Around four hundred Jews from Libya were even deported to Nazi concentration camps.⁷ But in most cases it was only with the birth of the State of Israel, in 1948, and the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli conflict, on the one hand, or with decolonisation and the rise of pan-Arabism in the 1950s on the other, that life conditions for the Jews in the region deteriorated. Then, a difficult period – which resulted in expulsions and/or migrations from their countries of birth – started for the Jewish communities of North Africa and the Middle East, which by the 1960s had almost entirely resettled to the State of Israel, Europe, or the Americas.

Considering all this, where might one place the borders of Europe for Jewish subjects who, as the Cairo-born writer Jacqueline Kahanoff argued, looked at this continent 'from afar'?⁸ How might one historicise the entanglements between colonial and postcolonial times, Europe and North Africa, Jewishness, Europeaness, and Arabness? To answer this, the chapter discusses Europe and its Mediterranean ramifications as a homeland in which the Jews of North Africa and Egypt harboured feelings of transnational belonging that lasted throughout the colonial period and accompanied them in their migrations in the 1950s and 1960s up to the present day. This *European Mediterranean* of sorts will be considered as an imaginative landscape where ideas of Jewishness, localness, and foreignness were, and still are, narrated: not so much a physical as a poetic entity that binds together northern and southern shores, colonial and postcolonial times.⁹ It is a landscape that shows the existence of original models of Jewishness, which in turn give life to 'new transnational constellations' of identity in today's Europe, 'question[ing] the norms of intelligibility that have declared the sea's death'.¹⁰

The chapter utilises a corpus of literary texts by North African and Egyptian Jewish authors writing in four different languages (French, Italian, Hebrew, and English), and coming from spatiotemporal contexts as different as colonial Egypt, present-day Israel, and 1960s France. Some are more renowned authors, such as Albert Memmi and Georges Cattai, whereas others – Victor Magiar, Moiz Benarroch, Daniela Dawan, and Teresa Cremisi among them – are less well known. Together they form part of a Sephardi literary diaspora that ‘looks back to a centuries-old past of Jewish-Arab coexistence, and forward to a still uncertain future’ rooted in histories of ‘migration, identity ruptures and spatial as well as cultural/linguistic displacements’.¹¹ These texts – together with late-nineteenth century archival sources – are interpreted with the aim of reconstructing the *poetic history* of the Jewish Mediterranean and the ideas that its inhabitants had about Europe: a continent that was reimagined by men and women who lived on the southern shore of the sea, or who had been born there and then in the 1950s migrated to Europe. By poetic history I mean a historical narration that pays attention to the imaginative representation of Europe in the Mediterranean and takes literature to be an alternative archive for studying its circulation and the emotions it provokes.¹² While focused on a specific case study, the chapter then portrays the Mediterranean as a space where contrasting diasporic memories intersect, and from where a less dichotomous view of Europe and North Africa did on occasion emerge. In fact, at a time of increased mobility, it seems important to shed light on the history of Jewish men and women who – in ways that are different, yet related to what we see in the case of today’s migrants – move along the borders of Europe. Their Mediterranean voyage can contribute to our rethinking of the role that migrants and diasporas – Europe’s ‘missing nation’, in the words of the French philosopher Etienne Balibar – have in the cultural imagination of this continent, particularly as regards its present and future.¹³

Europe as a Mirror: Jewish Voices between Egypt and the Mediterranean

The first stop on this voyage is Damanhur, a city on the delta of the river Nile not far from Alexandria. It is there that ‘on 17th of the month of Heshvan 5734 [17 November 1873]’, a Muslim boy was found ‘lying in the street with his phallus cut’. The parents of the boy initially admitted that the injury was due to a dog bite, but then ‘finding themselves in a state of great misery and thinking that they could profit from it’ and at the prompting of a certain Bassiouni Bechara, they declared that Moise Salomon – the local Jewish ritual slaughterer – had stabbed their son. Consequently, the authorities launched an investigation against Salomon, which ended soon after when the *moudir* (‘governor’) decided not to prosecute him. Three years later, in 1877, a young girl disappeared from her house and the same Bechara again spread a rumour that the Jews had taken her. A crowd

'gathered and entered [...] the synagogue, hit the Jews who were there and broke the cupboard where the Holy Law is, searching for the girl', who was found alive a few hours later in one of the fields surrounding Damanhur.¹⁴

At this point, Moïse Solomon and Rabbi Moïse Seroussi decided to appeal to the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* – a French Jewish institution known for its educational and philanthropic activities throughout the Middle East and North Africa.¹⁵ Despite a number of grammar and spelling mistakes, they managed to write to prominent coreligionists living in a country, France, where – perhaps somewhat naively – the two thought such things did not happen.¹⁶ They called upon the *Alliance* to help them, 'since the local authorities never stop questioning us about these issues and we cannot stand such barbaric acts anymore in Egypt, which nowadays can be considered to be part of Europe'.¹⁷ But what did this mean? Did it refer to the increased involvement of Egypt in global commerce and exchange that had followed the opening of the Suez Canal? Was it just a rhetorical statement to impress their interlocutors?

It is worth noting that up until the 1840s only about 5,000 Jews lived in Egypt, at the time formally still part of the Ottoman Empire. However, the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and the economic expansion that the country went through first during the years of British colonial rule (1882–1922) and then in the early years of the monarchy prompted the migration of thousands of Jews from North Africa and the Middle East, the Balkans, and Southern Europe who eventually formed a community of around 80,000 people.¹⁸ To the authors of the letter, France and Egypt, therefore, seemed part of one and the same, familiar environment – Europe and its Mediterranean extensions – in which notions of progress and modernity, as well as people and goods, were circulating. Europe functioned like a mirror revealing both what Egypt looked like and, conversely, what it should look like in the eyes of someone like Solomon and Seroussi. It was first and foremost an ideal and a metaphor for a better world, where citizens enjoyed the same rights and lived in nation states that protected them. But it was also a real place populated by men who, from Paris, might come to their rescue. Therefore, modernity here referred not so much to practical aspects like 'commercialization, bureaucracy, industrialization [...], fiscal, and legal reform'.¹⁹ It consisted also of the embrace of a set of cultural, social, and political dispositions by virtue of which a person might find a space of their own in a rapidly changing world. This bears witness to the dynamic nature of these colonial societies, shedding light on possible disruptions in the hierarchical relations between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean.²⁰

If we move forward to 1919 and leave the delta of the Nile for the Egyptian capital, Cairo, the importance of Europe – and, again, particularly of France – as the imaginative landscape on to which one's Egyptianness and Jewishness might be projected, becomes still more evident. 1919 was a foundational year for modern Egypt: following the end

of the First World War and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Britain decided to end the protectorate. The decision followed the so-called *liberal revolution*, when – under the guidance of the *Wafd* party leader Sa'ad Zaghlul – countrywide demonstrations and strikes against the British took place. Three years later, in 1922, Egypt became a constitutional monarchy, although Britain would continue to exercise a great deal of influence there, especially as regards matters of foreign policy and economy.²¹ It is in this context that the Jewish communities of Cairo and Alexandria developed conspicuously, and some of their members started to play a role in Egyptian political and cultural life. An interesting case is that of Georges Cattai, born in Paris in 1896 and belonging to one of the most important families of the Cairene Jewish elite. He was educated in both France and Egypt and in the 1920s, after acting as secretary to King Fu'ad, obtained a post as a diplomat. His interest in literature soon took precedence, however, and from the 1930s he embarked on a full-time career as a writer and literary critic, spending most of his adult life between Switzerland and France.²²

His *La promesse accomplie: France Egypte Judée*, a collection of poems published in 1922, exemplifies Cattai's original perspective on Europe and the Mediterranean world in which he lived. Cattai was by then not only part of the Cairene Francophone intellectual scene, but a public figure in contact with prominent French Catholic artists and intellectuals, from Stanislas Fumet to Max Jacob and Jacques and Raïssa Maritain.²³ Like Jacques Maritain, Cattai would convert to Catholicism in 1928, shortly after the death of his parents.²⁴ Even though conversions were on the whole quite rare among the Jews of Egypt, Cattai was not the only member of his family to embrace Christianity: suffice here to mention his cousins Charlotte Cattai, who in the 1920s married the Italian Marquess Umberto Lazagna, Jean-Marie Cattai de Menasce, and Jean de Menasce – both ordained priests.²⁵

La promesse accomplie appeared in Paris in 1922 but – as Cattai noted in the preface – was composed in Cairo between 1917 and 1919. The book was dedicated to two personalities as different as the British High Commissioner of Palestine, Herbert Samuel, and the French novelist and politician, Maurice Barrès. The title echoed a verse from the book of the prophet Ezekiel, in which God promises to take the People of Israel 'into the country for which I lifted up my hand to give it to your fathers' (Ezekiel 20:42). The subtitle, *France Egypte Judée*, highlighted the three spaces that were the most crucial reference points in Cattai's life:

Egypt, because I grew up under your sky
 [...]
 Chanaam, because I did not forget
 that you were the cradle of my first ancestors,
 [...]
 and because I drank milk from your breast,
 'France, mother of the arts, the arms and the laws'.²⁶

Here, there is no contradiction in a triple allegiance to France, Egypt, and *Chanaam* (Canaan) – a term that, just like the *Judée* of the title, immediately invests the land with a biblical and Christian aura. This multiple sense of belonging should be inscribed in a time when notions of nationality and citizenship were being intensely debated across the Mediterranean and, especially for Jews, 'existed on a spectrum [...] variously affected by gender, class and personal histories'.²⁷ The author manages to construct an identity of his own that reconciles feelings of cultural affinity with Europe and particularly with France, Egyptian nationalism, and Zionism. Even if Cattau's text reflects his own particular personality, it shows the connections that a member of the Jewish elite could have with European intellectuals. At the same time, if it is true that during the colonial period Arabs and Jews – who since early modern times had acted as mediators between the local authorities and foreign powers – started to move away from each other socially and in some cases even linguistically, in the 1920s and 1930s it was still possible to imagine Europe and a Middle Eastern country like Egypt as part of an interconnected cultural landscape.²⁸

A similar perspective is that of Lucien Sciuto, a journalist and writer also based in Cairo but born in Thessalonika in 1868. Sciuto studied at the schools of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* and became one of the most important late-Ottoman Jewish journalists, contributing to many newspapers in his home town and in Istanbul. In the late 1910s, he moved to Palestine and then in 1924 to Cairo. He died in Alexandria in 1947.²⁹ One of Sciuto's most important literary accomplishments was the 1938 collection of poems *Le peuple du messie*. In it, he explained how he felt attached not to one but two homelands, in this case the Land of Israel and Greece:

Under the sky of Zion my soul opened;
my eyes opened under the Aegean sky.
From the top of the Hermon to the peak of the Olympus,
my homeland is covered in blue and snow.
[...]
My soul to Judea and my heart to Hellas.
[...]
Cities where, as a pilgrim, I dragged my stick,
Athens and Zion, doubly promised land,
the eternal light was given to you both
by the hand of David and that of Plato.³⁰

The idea of Jews having more than one homeland is of course not unique to Sciuto. It bears a resemblance to what Georges Cattau wrote and is, more generally, a feature frequently attributed to Jews, often with potentially negative connotations such as disloyalty towards the state in which they live.³¹ Here it is considered almost as an accident of history and something to be proud of. Sciuto, who was born and grew up in Thessalonika,

felt close to both Greece and Zion: ‘My soul to Judea and my heart to Hellas’. The author presents himself as an enlightened *homme de lettres*, nurtured in European philosophy and attached to his ancestral Jewish faith. Sciuto then belonged to a Mediterranean world that extended from ancient Greece, with its rich cultural heritage, to the Land of Israel and lastly to twentieth-century Cairo, where he lived. In this world, the political and cultural borders between the Levant, Egypt, and Europe constantly overlapped, to the point that for Sciuto moving from Thessalonika – which had actually been part of the Ottoman Empire until 1913 – to Cairo and describing all this in French, meant remaining within a single (imaginary) continent.³²

A Distant Shore: The Jews of North Africa and Postcolonial Europe

It was only with the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, the worsening of Jewish-Arab relations in the region, and with decolonisation, that the situation for the Jews living in North Africa and in the Middle East changed definitively. In the case of Algeria, this was to prove particularly dire. Algeria had been part of the French Empire since 1830, was considered to be an integral part of France, and hosted a large European settler population, the so-called *pieds-noirs*. Due to its specificities, when compared with the French North African protectorates of Morocco and Tunisia, the Jews that lived in the country underwent a process of juridical and cultural emancipation that differed from and was deeper than that experienced by the Jews in the rest of the Maghreb. In fact, even though many Jews had lived in Algeria for centuries and were by then more or less Arabised, forty years after the beginning of French colonial rule, in 1870, all – with the exception of the Saharan Jews of the M’zab – obtained *en masse* French citizenship by virtue of the so-called Crémieux decree.³³ This created a distance between the Jews and the Algerian Muslim majority, which would soon be exacerbated by the cultural and social Frenchification that took place in the schools but also in the communal and synagogue life. The colonial dimension of the Crémieux decree should not be viewed in isolation from other aspects that informed its promulgation: firstly, the idea that, since Algeria was considered part of France, there could not be a differentiation between the Jews living in metropolitan France and those living in the French Algerian *départements*. As Joshua Schreier has explained, the logic of the Crémieux decree therefore largely ‘depended on grafting the teleology of French-Jewish emancipation [on] to the colonial narrative of civilising’.³⁴ Due to the peculiarities of this history, almost all of the c. 140,000 Algerian Jews left for France during the Algerian war (1954–1962) and only a small minority settled in Israel.³⁵

So, reminiscing about Jewish life in 1950s Algeria, Benjamin Stora – born in Constantine in 1950 and later to become one of the most important French historians of the Algerian War – wrote in *Les clés retrouvées*: ‘[I]n

the end, what did we have in common, us Jews and Muslims? The languages, Arabic, French, the same monotonous prayers, similar music, and culinary habits; the market, the streets [...]. But I felt as a Frenchman. That was the important [thing]. Being and *appearing* like the French'.³⁶ Another Algerian Jew – the anthropologist Joëlle Bahloul – confessed: 'Who has not encountered that disturbing feeling, when a young French schoolmate came to our house and discovered that even if we were the best at grammar and orthography, we still looked like Arabs, *chez nous*, in our intimacy?'.³⁷ The philosopher Jacques Derrida, born in Algiers in 1930, has added that, for him, Paris was 'the city of the mother tongue, a faraway country, close but far, not foreign [*étranger*]; that would be too simple, but strange [*étrange*], fantastic, and fantasmatic'.³⁸

This ambivalent feeling of belonging to a European country like France while still living in a largely Arab-Berber context is a foundational characteristic of the Algerian Jews, who always stood in the midst of contrasting legacies that – already, before the end of colonialism – seemed separated by the depths of the Mediterranean. Once again, as Derrida has explained: 'Between the model of the school, of grammar and literature, on the one hand, and the spoken language on the other, there was the sea, a symbolically infinite space, a chasm for all the pupils of the French schools of Algeria: an abyss'.³⁹ The feminist philosopher Hélène Cixous has therefore noted how her real mother tongue was not a European language such as French, but a blending of idioms, smells, and tastes that came to form Oran, the city of her birth: '[T]he names of Oran smelled. [...] The name of Oran smells of the Bible and incense. [...] Thus I lived in the bosom of Oran, bathing in a dissemination of signifiers that lulled and moved my heart, I was in this language intangible in its totality, elusive compact, and which I could never hold in my mouth'.⁴⁰

Other Algerian Jews evoke the centuries-old ties that bind their families to Algeria by going back to the early modern era and connecting this land not only with France, but also to *Sefarad* – the Iberian peninsula that some of their ancestors had left following the activities of the Inquisition and the expulsion decree of 1492: 'What a bizarre fate, little Gabriel, at a distance of five centuries you are going through what your ancestor had gone through. He left Spain to arrive in Algeria and you [have] just left Algeria for the unknown. He had the same name as you and his father the same name as your father. You read his book and write its last page'.⁴¹ So, if the affinity of these Jews with Europe certainly has to do with colonialism and their postcolonial migration itinerary, it reflects nonetheless a longer history of exile and diaspora that brings the southern and northern shores of the Mediterranean closer to one another. The Franco-Algerian-Jewish homeland of Derrida, Bahloul, Cixous, and others then re-emerges through words disseminated by or even – considering the traumatic memory of the Algerian war in contemporary France, particularly for the colonial repatriates – lost in the Mediterranean.⁴²

Once again with regard to the mother tongue and French as a *laissez-passer* for Europe and European culture, the Tunisian Jewish writer Albert Memmi evokes the figure of the Arab Jew and the troubled identity with which he left his native Tunis for Paris in the early 1960s: 'I was, myself, a guest of the French language. Even worse, I was an eternal guest, never entirely at ease with the others, I could not think of going back to where I belonged. Sooner or later [...] the Tunisians and Algerians would go back to their language, their home. But in which house, which home [...] was I finally to rest one day?'⁴³ It is worth recalling that the Tunisian diaspora was historically divided into three main subgroups, of which the largest was that formed by the so-called *twansa*, followed by the *grana*, and the Jews of Djerba. Whereas the *twansa* had resided in Tunisia since at least late antiquity, the *grana* descended from Sephardi Jews who had arrived from the Tuscan port city of Livorno at the end of the seventeenth century. Djerba hosted a small yet ancient and well-integrated Jewry that formed an integral component of the island's social fabric. The life and sociocultural status of Tunisian Jews improved during the French protectorate, established in 1881. In their case too, the profound impact that France had on their identity influenced their life trajectories at the end of the protectorate when most of their community, numbering around 105,000, decided to emigrate to France rather than Israel.⁴⁴

The migration to France is portrayed, for example, in novels by Chochana Boukhobza. Born in Sfax in 1959, Boukhobza has often defined herself as an exile. Born, then, in Tunisia and raised in Paris, at the age of seventeen, she moved to Israel but after a few years returned to France where she now lives. In her 1996 *Pour l'amour du père*, she talks about a Tunisian Jewish family traumatised by migration. Its members cannot find a place for themselves in the new French homeland: in Paris 'it is always grey, it is always bad [weather]', whereas Tunis *el-hedra* (Arabic: 'the green') 'looked like a garden, with little houses facing the sea'.⁴⁵ The climate becomes a mirror of the feelings of the protagonists: '[T]he father cannot be cured of Tunisia, he always compares everything, he compares the taste of the fruit he ate *là-bas* with those that he buys at the market in Clichy; he says that life was easier under the sun, it had a taste...'.⁴⁶ This does not happen only in the case of the Jews, but also of the Europeans who had lived in North Africa since early colonial times. For example, the Italian Marinette Pendola – born in Tunisia into a family of Sicilian farmers – talks about Italy as 'the distant shore', a mythical country where 'perhaps it rains a lot. *Tata Ilù*, who was there two years ago, talked about green fields even in the middle of the summer'.⁴⁷

But after the migration, it is Tunisia that becomes a faraway place where everything is better, whose echoes can still be heard in Europe – for example in the Parisian neighbourhood of Belleville. The Tunisian Jewish quarter *par excellence*, Belleville, has been defined as 'a protective universe where the brutality of assimilation [into French society] was alleviated'.⁴⁸ In the aftermath of the migration, Belleville gave the illusion of being closer to the lost homeland: people lived as if in a village, surrounded by newly established

cafés and shops that often bore names like *La Goulette* or *Dar Djerba*. It is there that the Tunisian Jews portrayed in Boukhobza's novel 'little by little, [...] made their neighbourhood come back to life in their memory. [...] For them, it was like going back to their true and most authentic self. [...] They drink mint tea, eat semolina sweets. They never talk about the present...'.⁴⁹

As for colonial Egypt, so too in the case of Morocco some authors stress the presence – which, however, can be transformed into an utter absence – of feelings of belonging to more than one country: 'I am foreign to everywhere, but nowhere is foreign to me', writes Moiz Benarrosh in his 2010 collection of poems, *Lo' holekh le-shum maqom* ('Not going anywhere').⁵⁰ Born in Tetouan, Morocco, in 1959, Benarrosh migrated to Israel in 1972 with his family. The Jews of Morocco were the largest Jewish community in North Africa, comprising some 280,000 people, and also one of the most integrated in terms of language, culture, and identity. Like the Tunisians, they were historically divided into two (interrelated) groups, namely, the *toshavim*, who had lived in Morocco since ancient times, and the *megorashim*, who had arrived from the Iberian peninsula in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Most of the Moroccan Jews left for the State of Israel in the 1950s and 1960s, although a significant number migrated also to other locations, mainly France and Canada.⁵¹

In his poems, Benarrosh portrays the relationship between exile and return, the Moroccan past and the Israeli present, through the prism of the Sephardi identity of his family, which connects him, albeit in conflicting ways, to both shores of the Mediterranean and makes him feel more at home in Europe than in Israel: "Mother, are we there already?" "Already for quite some time, my son". "Since when?" "Since twenty years ago". "Then, why do I feel that we are still travelling to the Promised Land?" "Because the promise is unfulfilled". [...] "You said that here all the children were like me, all Jews like us, but they are not like us, they are different [...]. Why do I feel more at home in Spain, even in France, than here...".⁵² The migration caused the Jews of Morocco to lose familial and geographic coordinates that had once been much clearer.

If one turns now to Libya, the only North African country yet to be mentioned, the situation is rather similar. The case of Daniela Dawan, who was born in Tripoli in 1956 and migrated to Rome around 1967, is relevant. Her novel, *Qual è la via del vento* (2018), is about the last years of Jewish presence in Libya. The narrative hinges upon the story of the Cohen family, preparing to leave the country for Italy following the fall of the monarchy, the anti-Jewish violence that erupted in the capital and in Benghazi in 1967 and lastly the rise to power of Qaddafi.⁵³ At the heart of it is the character of Micol Cohen, who leaves Libya when nine years old and then in 2004, after forty years, decides to return on an official visit with a delegation of Libyan Jews. The Libyans are the largest and most visible North African Jewish community present in Italy, particularly in Rome and Milan.⁵⁴ It should be noted that the migration of Jews from Libya had begun around

1948, although these first waves were directed to Israel more than Italy, where Jews started to arrive mainly after 1967. While still in their land of birth and despite the small size of their community, only around 38,000 strong, the Jews were relatively well integrated into the local society and economy. Nonetheless, Italian colonialism had led to the Italianisation especially of the upper echelons of Libyan Jewish society, but this did not erase the many ties that the Jews had with the Arab culture of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, or with the Arabic language.⁵⁵

So, for example, when Micol's family decides to leave Tripoli, his father Ruben asks for help from an Arab friend, Fiallah – who, however, seems convinced that the cohabitation between Jews and Arabs could continue once the turmoil that followed the fall of the monarchy subsides: “And then, can you imagine leaving your work, your newly-restored office [...] your country, your sea?” [...] I do not recognise you any more. Arabs, Jews... we were brothers [...]. You delude yourself into severing all ties with these places, but you know that it is not possible’.⁵⁶ But when his daughter Micol returns to Libya in 2004, she is torn between feelings of nostalgia and sorrow, familiarity and estrangement. On the plane from Rome to Tripoli, she looks down at ‘the Mediterranean, a motionless slab of steel. Here and there you can see ships that look like tiny white dots. Her balloon, she remembers suddenly. She smiles: does it really exist, where will it be? Perhaps, flying over Libya and the Mediterranean, it passed by where she is, it got lost in the clouds [...]. “Oh, dad, forgive me! It cost you so much to take me away and now I am going back...”’.⁵⁷ Another Libyan Jewish author, Victor Magiar – who was also born in Tripoli in 1956 and migrated to Rome in 1967 – in his semi-autobiographical novel, *E venne la notte* (2003) describes the Mediterranean that, in this case, the young protagonist Hayim sees from the plane that will take him and his family to Italy. Here, the sea ‘that in the daylight divides its lands, in the silence of the night becomes a cradle and hosts its languages, in dreaming it confuses time, mixes epochs and binds civilisations’.⁵⁸

The Mediterranean becomes a strange *mare nostrum* (‘our sea’), a road to liberty and Europe, but also ‘an intricate site of encounters and currents. [...] a tempestuous sea, where no single perspective is ever able to fully impose its view’.⁵⁹ It is a space that both divides and unites Libya and Italy, that Magiar and Dawan describe with ambivalence as if only at night, and under the spell of memory, could the sea continue to be ‘a cradle’ that unites its two distant shores. During the day, its inhabitants seem in fact lost in a (postcolonial) European archipelago, consisting of islands unable to communicate with each other, as if they had little or nothing to share.⁶⁰

Epilogue

This voyage across the Jewish Mediterranean started with a quotation from the Egyptian-born Israeli Jacqueline Kahanoff, for whom Europe ‘although far away, was inseparably part of us’.⁶¹ Since Kahanoff wrote those words

in 1950, Europe and the Mediterranean have often been at the centre of the cultural and political debate: suffice to think of the numerous initiatives on Euro-Mediterranean cooperation that have succeeded one another over the last thirty years, from the 1995 Barcelona Process to the 2008 Union for the Mediterranean.⁶² However, if over the centuries the Mediterranean has been a connecting sea, along the shores of which various civilisations have flourished, the history of the Jews of the Arab world testifies that it also incarnates a divisive and *corrupting* space, a (real and imaginative) frontier between different ethno-religious groups, coloniser and colonised.⁶³ But what can the North African and Egyptian Jewish past tell us when it comes to today's Europe? How should we consider Europe, North Africa, and their Mediterranean intersections, when viewing them from the perspective of someone like Georges Cattai, Albert Memmi or Daniela Dawan?

When asking such questions, it is worth reverting to the idea of the Mediterranean as a porous border, acknowledging – as Franco Cassano does in his *Il pensiero meridiano* – that 'Mediterranean today means placing the border, the line of division and contact between men and civilisations at the centre'.⁶⁴ The North African and Egyptian Jewish writers I have presented here took us on a complex itinerary of the imagination along some of the ethno-religious and national constellations that traverse the sea. For some of them, Europe is a continent that makes the lands of their birth part of a geographically distant yet imaginatively familiar *là-bas*, where a large part of their dreams still are. Others look at it as a land situated beyond a tempestuous sea, constellated by an archipelago of islands increasingly detached from one another. However, what these poetic representations reveal is the role that a migrant and diasporic community such as the Jews of the southern shore of the Mediterranean – through the voices of the writers scrutinised here – can have as an intellectual bridge between North Africa and Europe.⁶⁵

As I have already observed, during colonial times, Europe entered the everyday life of the North African and Middle Eastern Jews, in the guise of the school that they attended, the languages they spoke and the modern habits that many of their number embraced. Europe then became a mirror, sometimes a distorting one, through which their life and identity in cities like Cairo, Tunis, and Algiers came to be rethought. Together with factors that had to do with the region's political history, this brought about a separation between these Jewish communities and the Muslim majority. But paradoxically, when many of these Jews started to migrate from North Africa and Egypt to their (imaginary) homeland, to Europe, their migration took them to a space where their identity was lost or out of place. The geographical, cultural, and national separation between the northern and southern shore of the Mediterranean sea led to their being on the border between seemingly irreconcilable worlds: it had made them strangers first to the (colonial) North African motherland – now lost in a temporal and spatial elsewhere – and now to the (postcolonial) European country

of immigration too.⁶⁶ The Jews found themselves trapped in the middle of inextricable Mediterranean chronologies and geographies, constantly overlapping and attesting to the difficulty of distinguishing between colonial and postcolonial times, Europe and North Africa. As Teresa Cremisi – born in Alexandria into a family of Italian and Greek origin that emigrated first to Italy and then to France – notes, they were torn between ‘that East of my youth [...] that slowly went away’ and ‘that West in which I had placed all my hopes, to which I adapted with stubborn and naïve good will, to which I had entrusted my future’.⁶⁷

However, this double identity and the persistence of its memories through the years and after the migration, also gives them – *and us* – the opportunity to imagine a different future, one in which the movement of people and ideas across borders will be viewed in more positive terms: a future that, without indulging in idyllic readings of the past, acknowledges the significance of the experience of urban conviviality in places like turn-of-the-century Alexandria or interwar Tunis, of the intellectual and social connections between Jews, Muslims, and others that existed there. In this way, it may perhaps be possible to reconceive Europe and North Africa as an interconnected Mediterranean landscape that goes beyond – but does not ignore – the borders of nation states and the ethno-national and religious identities that traverse it. Through Sephardi Jewish literature, and the many other histories of migration that the Mediterranean region conceals, we could think of Europe as part of a too often forgotten *liquid continent*, extending from Oran to Paris, from Rome to Tripoli, that continues to be both close and far, half-mythical, half-real, and always *en route*.⁶⁸

Notes

- 1 Jacqueline Kahanoff, ‘Europe From Afar’, in *Mongrels or Marvels: The Levantine Writings of Jacqueline Shohet Kahanoff*, edited by Deborah Starr and Sasson Somekh (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 107.
- 2 Seth Schwartz, *Were the Jews a Mediterranean Society? Reciprocity and Solidarity in Ancient Judaism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), especially 21–44; Shlomo D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Cairo Geniza* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967–1988), and Matthias B. Lehmann and Jessica Marglin (eds.), *Jews and The Mediterranean* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2020). More generally, see: David Abulafia, *The Great Sea: A Human History of the Mediterranean* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).
- 3 Aron Rodrigue, ‘L’exportation du paradigme révolutionnaire: ‘Son influence sur le judaïsme sépharade et oriental’, in *Histoire politique des Juifs de France*, edited by Pierre Birnbaum (Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1990), 221–43, and Francesca Bregoli, *Mediterranean Enlightenment: Livornese Jews, Tuscan Culture, and Eighteenth-Century Reform* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014). On the circulation of ideas in the modern Mediterranean more generally, see Maurizio Isabella and Konstantina Zanou (eds.), *Mediterranean Diasporas: Politics and Ideas in the Long 19th Century* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

- 4 Suffice it to consider: Zvi Zohar, *Rabbinic Creativity in the Modern Middle East* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).
- 5 For an overview of the region and its Jewish communities, see Reeva Spector Simon, Michael Laskier, and Sara Reguer (eds.), *The Jews of the Middle East and North Africa in Modern Times* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), and Norman Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands in Modern Times* (Lincoln: Nebraska University Press, 2003).
- 6 Michael Laskier, 'The Evolution of Zionist Activity in the Jewish Communities of Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria: 1897–1947', *Studies in Zionism*, 4/2 (1983), 205–36.
- 7 See the monographic issue on 'Les Juifs d'Orient face au nazisme et à la Shoah' of the *Revue d'histoire de la Shoah*, 2 (2016), and Sarah A. Stein and Aomar Boum (eds.), *The Holocaust and North Africa* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018).
- 8 Kahanoff, 'Europe from Afar', 100–13.
- 9 I have already discussed some of these issues in: Dario Miccoli, 'Il grande mare: Letteratura e immaginari ebraici nel Mediterraneo', *Materia giudaica*, 24 (2019), 505–12. Also see Ewa Tartakowsky, *Les Juifs et le Maghreb: Fonctions sociales d'une littérature d'exil* (Tours: Presses Universitaires François-Rabelais, 2016); Edwige Tamalet Talbayev, *The Transcontinental Maghreb: Francophone Literature Across the Mediterranean* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017).
- 10 Naor Ben-Yehoyada, *The Mediterranean Incarnate: Region Formation Between Sicily and Tunisia Since World War II* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017), 23–4.
- 11 Dario Miccoli, 'Introduction', in *Contemporary Sephardic and Mizrahi Literature: A Diaspora*, edited by Miccoli (London: Routledge, 2017), 8.
- 12 Among the numerous works on the intersection between history and literature, see in particular: Ivan Jablonka, *L'histoire est une littérature contemporaine: Manifeste pour les sciences sociales* (Paris: Seuil, 2014).
- 13 Etienne Balibar, 'At the Borders of Europe: From Cosmopolitanism to Cosmopolitics', *Translation*, 4 (2014), 83–103. For a more radical approach to these issues, centred on the idea of Europe as a 'self-centering metaphor' that needs to be overcome, see: Hamid Dabashi, *Europe and Its Shadows: Coloniality After Empire* (London: Pluto Press, 2019).
- 14 Moïse Salomon and Moïse Seroussi to the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*, 15 September 1878, Archives of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, Paris, Egypte I.C.I.
- 15 See: André Kaspi, ed., *Histoire de l'Alliance Israélite Universelle de 1860 à nos jours* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2010). I have analysed in detail the activities of the *Alliance* in Egypt in Dario Miccoli, *Histories of the Jews of Egypt: An Imagined Bourgeoisie, 1880s–1950s* (London: Routledge, 2015), 20–52.
- 16 Ritual murder is an old anti-Semitic accusation according to which Jews killed Christian children to use their blood for ritual purposes – namely, to make the *matzot*, the unleavened bread eaten during *Pesah*, the Jewish Passover. The most famous case in the Middle East took place in Damascus in 1840, as explained in: Jonathan Frankel, *The Damascus Affair, "Ritual Murder", Politics, and the Jews in 1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Cases of ritual murder accusation had taken place in the Ottoman Empire as early as the sixteenth century. However, none of them had the resonance of the Damascus affair. On this, see Amnon Cohen, 'Ritual Murder Accusations Against the Jews during the Days of Suleiman the Magnificent', *Journal of Turkish Studies*, 10 (1986), 73–8.

- 17 Salomon and Seroussi to the Alliance Israélite Universelle, 15 September 1878. On Jewish life in nineteenth-century Egypt, see Jacob Landau, *Jews in Nineteenth-Century Egypt* (New York: New York University Press, 1969).
- 18 Gudrun Krämer, *The Jews of Modern Egypt, 1914–1952* (London: IB Tauris, 1989), 57. See also: Michael Laskier, *The Jews of Egypt, 1920–1970: In the Midst of Zionism, Anti-Semitism and the Middle East Conflict* (New York: New York University Press, 1992); Shimon Shamir (ed.), *The Jews of Egypt: A Mediterranean Society in Modern Times* (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 1987); Joel Beinin, *The Dispersion of Egyptian Jewry: Culture, Politics and the Formation of a Modern Diaspora* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986) and Miccoli, *Histories of the Jews of Egypt*, passim.
- 19 Anastasios Gekas, ‘Class and Cosmopolitanism: The Historiographical Fortunes of Merchants in Eastern Mediterranean Ports’, *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 24/2 (2008), 96.
- 20 On modernity in the Middle East: Keith D. Watenpaugh, *Being Modern in the Middle East. Revolution, Nationalism, Colonialism, and the Arab Middle Class* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); Fatma M. Goecek, *Rise of the Bourgeoisie, Demise of Empire: Ottoman Westernization and Social Change* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Toufoul Abou-Hodeib, *A Taste for Home: The Modern Middle Class in Ottoman Beirut* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017).
- 21 See: Robert Tignor, *Modernization and British Colonial Rule in Egypt, 1882–1914* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), and, more generally, Afaf L. Al-Sayyid Marsot, *A Short History of Modern Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), and Selma Botman, ‘The Liberal Age, 1923–1952’, in *The Cambridge History of Modern Egypt*, edited by Martin Daly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), ii, 285–308.
- 22 More on Georges Cattaui in: Daniel Lançon, ‘Georges Cattaui ou la France participée’, in *Entre Nil et sable*, edited by Marc Kober, Irène Fenoglio, and Daniel Lançon, 87–103; Massimo Danzi, ‘Georges Cattaui e Gianfranco Contini: Un’amicizia illustrata attraverso il carteggio inedito’, *Strumenti critici*, 17/1 (2002), 119–58. See also my article: Dario Miccoli, ‘A Fragile Cradle: Writing Jewishness, Nationhood and Modernity in Cairo, 1920–1940’, *Jewish Social Studies*, 21/3 (2016), 1–29.
- 23 Frédéric Gugelot, *La conversion des intellectuels au catholicisme en France (1835–1935)* (Paris: CNRS Editions, 1998), esp. 169–210.
- 24 Maurice Lugassy, ‘Albert Cohen: La tentation du Christ’, in *Cahiers Albert Cohen – Figures de l’étranger*, 21 (2011), 68.
- 25 Dominique Avon, *Les frères prêcheurs en Orient: Les Dominicains du Caire (années 1910–années 1960)* (Paris: Cerf, 2006), 140–4; Philippe Chenaux, ‘Jean de Menasce et Georges Cattaui: Deux fils d’Israël parvenus au Christ’, in *Jean de Menasce (1902–1973)*, edited by Michel Dousse and Jean-Michel Roessli (Freiburg: Bibliothèque Cantonale et Universitaire, 1998), 71–7.
- 26 Georges Cattaui, *La promesse accomplie: France, Egypte, Judée* (Paris: Bloch, 1922), 35. The verse *France mère des arts, des armes et des lois* is a quotation from a classic sixteenth-century poem by the French poet Joachim du Bellay.
- 27 Sarah Arevaya Stein, ‘Citizens of A Fictional Nation: Ottoman-Born Jews in France During the First World War’, *Past and Present*, 226/1 (2015), 229.
- 28 On the role of Jews as mediators, see: Bruce Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Heather J. Starkey, *A History of Muslims, Christians, and Jews in the Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).
- 29 Gershon Lewenthal, ‘Sciuto, Lucien’, in *Encyclopedia of Jews*, edited by Norman Stillman, iv, 274–76.

- 30 Lucien Sciuto, *Le peuple du Messie. Poème et autres poèmes* (Cairo: Editions d'Orient, 1938), 65 and 67.
- 31 Beinín, *The Dispersion*, 90–117.
- 32 On the history of Thessalonika and its Jews between Ottoman and Greek rule: Devin E. Naar, *Jewish Salonica: Between the Ottoman Empire and Modern Greece* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016).
- 33 Joëlle Allouche-Benayoun, 'Les Juifs d'Algérie: du dhimmi au citoyen français', in *Les Juifs d'Algérie: Une histoire de ruptures*, edited by Joëlle Allouche-Benayoun and Geneviève Dermenjian (Aix-en-Provence: Presses Universitaires de Provence, 2015), 27–42, and in the same volume: Denise Charbit, 'L'historiographie du décret Crémieux: Le retour du refoulé', 43–61. On the Jews of the M'zab, who only obtained French citizenship in 1961: Sarah Abrevaya Stein, *Saharan Jews and the Fate of French Algeria* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014).
- 34 Joshua Schreier, *Arabs of the Jewish Faith: The Civilizing Mission in Colonial Algeria* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 174.
- 35 See: Benjamin Stora, *Les trois exils: Juifs d'Algérie* (Paris: Stock, 2006).
- 36 Benjamin Stora, *Les clés retrouvées: Une enfance juive à Constantine* (Paris: Stock, 2015), 39.
- 37 Joëlle Bahloul, *Le culte de la table dressée: Rites et traditions de la table juive algérienne* (Paris: Métailié, 1983), 42.
- 38 Jacques Derrida, *Le monolinguisme de l'autre* (Paris: Galilée, 1996), 73.
- 39 Derrida, *Le monolinguisme de l'autre*, 75.
- 40 Hélène Cixous, 'The names of Oran', in *Algeria in Others' Languages*, edited by Anne-Emmanuelle Berger (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 18–6.
- 41 Didier Nebot, *Mémoire d'un dhimmi: Cinq siècles d'histoire juive en Algérie* (Sèvres: Les Editions des Rosiers, 2012), 68.
- 42 On the memory of the Algerian war in France, see for example: Benjamin Stora, *La gangrène et l'oubli: La mémoire de la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: Editions de la Découverte, 2005). On the Algerian repatriates: Michèle Baussant, *Pieds-noirs: Mémoires d'exil* (Paris: Stock, 2002) and Jean-Jacques Jordi, *De l'exode à l'exil: Rapatriés et pieds-noirs en France* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1993).
- 43 Albert Memmi, *Juifs et arabes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1974), 164.
- 44 Paul Sebag, *Histoire des Juifs de Tunisie. Des origines à nos jours* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1991); Lucette Valensi and Abraham Udovitch, *The Last Arab Jews: The Communities of Djerba, Tunisia* (New York: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1984). On the *grana* (or *qrana*): Leila El Houssi, 'The Qrāna Italian Jewish Community of Tunisia between XVIII–XIX Century: An Example of Transnational Dimension', *Studi Emigrazione*, 186 (April–June 2012), 361–9.
- 45 Chochana Boukhobza, *Pour l'amour du père* (Paris: Seuil, 1996), 86.
- 46 Boukhobza, *Pour l'amour du père*, 10.
- 47 Marinette Pendola, *La riva lontana* (Palermo: Sellerio, 2000), 214.
- 48 Patrick Simon and Claude Tapia, *Le Belleville des Juifs tunisiens* (Paris: Autrement, 1998), 49.
- 49 Boukhobza, *Pour l'amour*, 50–1.
- 50 Moiz Benarrosh, *Lo' holekh le-shum maqom* ('Not going anywhere') (Beer-Sheva: Rasis Nahara, 2010) [Hebrew].
- 51 As an introduction, see Haim Zafrani, *Deux mille ans de vie juive au Maroc* (Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose: 1998); Yigal Bin-Nun, 'La négociation de l'évacuation en masse des Juifs du Maroc', in *La fin du Judaïsme en terres d'Islam*, edited by Smhuel Trigano (Paris: Denoel, 2009), 303–58.
- 52 Moiz Benarrosh, *Ha-trilogiah ha-tetu'anit* ('The Tetouan trilogy') (Jerusalem: Moben, 2007), 13 [Hebrew].
- 53 See: Anna Baldinetti, *The Origins of the Libyan Nation: Colonial Legacy, Exile and the Emergence of a New Nation-State* (London: Routledge, 2010).

- 54 Enzo Campelli, *Comunità va cercando ch'è sì cara... Sociologia dell'Italia ebraica* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2013), 15.
- 55 Maurice Roumani, *Gli ebrei di Libia: Dalla coesistenza all'esodo* (Rome: Castelvechchi, 2015), 264. See also: Renzo De Felice, *Ebrei in un paese arabo: Gli ebrei nella Libia contemporanea tra colonialismo, nazionalismo arabo e sionismo (1835–1970)* (Bologna: il Mulino, 1987), especially 335–9; Piera Rossetto, *Mémoires de diaspora, diaspora de mémoires: Juifs de Libye entre Israël et l'Italie, de 1948 à nos jours* (Toulouse: Unpublished PhD, Ca' Foscari University and EHESS, 2015). On the memorial literature of the Libyan Jews: Daniele Comberiat, “Province minori” di un “impero minore”: Narrazioni italo-ebraiche dalla Libia e dal Dodecaneso’, in *Fuori centro: Percorsi postcoloniali nella letteratura italiana*, edited by Roberto Deroberti (Rome: Aracne, 2010), 95–110; Piera Rossetto, ‘Note ai margini di una migrazione: Donne ebreie dalla Libia tra Israele e Italia’, in *Il genere nella ricerca storica*, edited by Saveria Chemotti and Maria Cristina La Rocca (Padua: Il Poligrafo, 2015), 190–200; Raniero Speelman, ‘Ebrei ottomani – Scrittori italiani: L’apporto di scrittori immigrati in Italia dai paesi dell’ex Impero ottomano’, *EJOS*, 7/2 (2005), 1–32.
- 56 Daniela Dawan, *Qual è la via del vento?* (Rome: *efo*, 2018), 40–1.
- 57 Dawan, *Qual è la via del vento?*, 159.
- 58 Victor Magiar, *E venne la notte* (Florence: Giuntina, 2003), 268.
- 59 Iain M. Chambers, *Mediterranean Crossings: The Politics of an Interrupted Modernity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 32–3.
- 60 Here, I draw upon Massimo Cacciari, *L’arcipelago* (Milan: Adelphi, 1997).
- 61 Kahanoff, ‘Europe from Afar’, 107.
- 62 See: Tobias Schumacher, ‘Introduction: The Study of Euro-Mediterranean Cultural and Social Co-operation in Perspective’, in *Conceptualizing Cultural and Social Dialogue in the Euro-Mediterranean Area*, edited by Michelle Pace and Tobias Schumacher (London: Routledge, 2007), 3–12; Stefania Panebianco, ‘The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in Perspective: The Political and Institutional Context’, in *A New Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Identity*, edited by Stefania Panebianco (London: Frank Cass, 2003), 23–46, and *The Union for the Mediterranean*, edited by Federica Bicchi and Richard Gillespie (London: Routledge, 2012).
- 63 Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (London: Blackwell, 2000).
- 64 Franco Cassano, *Il pensiero meridiano* (Rome: Laterza, 2005), xxiv.
- 65 On the Mediterranean intellectual as bridge: Konstantina Zanou, *Transnational Patriotism in the Mediterranean, 1800–1850: Stammering the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), esp. 161–4.
- 66 A similar process occurred in the case of the North African and Middle Eastern Jews who migrated to the State of Israel. See for example: Sami Shalom-Chetrit, *Intra-Jewish Conflict in Israel: White Jews, Black Jews* (London: Routledge, 2009); Hannan Hever, Yehudah Shenhav, and Pnina Motzafi-Haller, *Mizrahim be-Isra’el* (‘Mizrahim in Israel’) (Jerusalem: The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, 2002) [Hebrew]; Aviad Moreno, Noah Gerber, Ester Meir-Glitzstein and Ofir Schiff (eds.), *Ha-historiah ha-’arukhab shel ha-mizrahim: qivunim hadashim be-heqer yehudei-’artzot ha-Islam* (‘The Long History of the Mizrahim: New Directions in the Research on the Jews of the Lands of Islam’) (Jerusalem: Mossad Van Leer/Universitat Ben-Gurion, 2021) [Hebrew].
- 67 Teresa Cremisi, *La Triomphante* (Milan: Adelphi, 2016), 111–2.
- 68 The idea of the Mediterranean as a ‘liquid continent’ is taken from Gabriel Audisio, *Jeunesse de la Méditerranée* (Paris: Gallimard, 1936), 273. On Audisio’s ideas about Europe and the Mediterranean, see the chapter by Miriam Begliuomini in this book.