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Tangier, Mobile City: Re-making Borders in the Straits of Gibraltar

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This chapter looks at some of the ways in which the city of Tangier is attempting to reconfigure itself as a 'Euro-Mediterranean' border metropolis and a key 'gate' to 'EU'rope. It looks at the ways in which spatial metaphors and in particular metaphors relying on notions of openness, mobility and flow are invoked in order to re-imagine the city's position and its relations (political, economic, cultural) to the European continent. What is of interest to the theme of this volume is how such evo- and invo-cations couple new 'mobile' forms of *re-bordering*, *division* and *fracture*, with new forms and modes of political and economic *regionalization* and *connection*. Drawing on ongoing field work in Tangier, Morocco as part of the research project 'At the Gates of Europe: Re-mapping Tangier' funded by the National Geographic Society's Global Exploration Fund, the chapter draws attention to some of the ways in which current projects of constituting a single *espace du détroit* rely upon a play of selective mobilities and strategies of selective openness and closure in order to reconfigure the Straits of Gibraltar and the greater Tangier region *both* as a gate(way) to Europe and its wall. The chapter highlights how a variety of actors in this border-space attempt to engage the boundary, transgress and (partially) transcend it, in a series of strategic spaces and interventions, mobilizing the border as an *outil spatial*, a 'spatial tool', to use Piermay's (2009) characterization, as, to cite the introduction to this volume, 'a device permanently adapting to the flows that it tries to control' (Amilhat-Szary & Giraut, 2015).

I begin with a brief overview of the history, real and imagined, of Tangier as an 'open' city at the borders of Europe, moving on to a discussion of its place in today's Euro-Mediterranean geopolitical enjeux, in political–economic strategies of region-making as well as attempts by the

AQ4 European Union at securitizing its southern borders. With this context in mind, I then turn to a few illustrative examples that provide a window into contemporary attempts at re-placing the city and its fortunes by appealing to an idealized set of mobilities and flows, reimagining the city as a logistic, economic and cultural 'gateway' and node. In my discussion, I highlight both formal political and economic initiatives but also equally the branding of Tangier in international lifestyle magazines, for these have been crucial in the crafting of the city's new imaginative geographies today, just as the literary imaginations of decades past (for an overview of these latter, see Shoemake, 2013).

1 L'Appel de Tanger, again?

Tangier has long been an important cultural contact point between Europe and Africa, 'not completely Africa, yet so much more than Europe', as Daniel Rondeau (1999) described it in his essay 'L'Appel de Tanger', an appeal that long drew foreigners to the city, from the Orientalist painters of the 1800s, to the Beat Generation writers and poets of the 1950s. Both during colonial times and under its status as the International Zone, Tangier was always a city that possessed 'a historically fraught relationship to the nation form, a space at once extra-national and international, a place of diasporic convergences' (Edwards, 2005, p. 80; Walonen, 2011).

This notion of a city 'at the edge', where anything and everything was possible, where the usual rules and regulations of the state – any state – were suspended, persisted well beyond the end of Tangier's unique extra-territorial legal status in 1956. The dream-like visions of Tangier cultivated by Beat Generation writers, most prominently William Burroughs, a long-time denizen of the city, were in many ways linked to their own need to escape the strictures of the United States of the 1950s. As Maria Porras Sanchez (2010, p. 94) argues,

> by displacing themselves and stepping outside of the coercive atmosphere of the US, they projected their unfulfilled desires into another reality. They transformed Tangier into a 'surreality' that no longer responded to the normal laws of time and space, and where experience tended to become altered;

thus, a place outside of time and space, where literally everything was possible and available. William Burroughs' (1989) imagined realm of the 'Interzone' (an abbreviation of the International Zone) that was to

become the setting and setting-off point for his novel *Naked Lunch*, drew precisely on Tangier's seemingly liminal and labile realm of possibility:

> In Interzone it might or might not be a dream, and which way it falls might be in the balance while I watch this tea glass in the sun [...] The meaning of the Interzone, its space–time location is at a point where three-dimensional fact merges into dream, and dreams erupt into the real world (cited in (Harris, 2003, p. 300).

It has been argued that for Burroughs and many of his circle, such as artist Brion Gysin, it did not really matter 'that they were in Morocco' (Geiger, 2005, p. 13; for an alternative reading see Hibbard, 2010). But that, in a sense, is precisely the point: in their imaginations, the city became something else, torn from place and at once re-placed in a dreamworld. Tangier became a stand-in for their own collages of history/culture, times/spaces, 'fusions and reversals of past and future, fact and fantasy' (Gysin & Ferez Kuri, 2003; also Hoptman, et al., 2010; Khbar Bladna, 2013; Walonen, 2011).

But what do the Beats – whose influence on Tangier has been greatly exaggerated – have to do with contemporary attempts at the city's re-fashioning? First, the Tangier myth cultivated by Burroughs and other Beat writers continues to be revived in more recent books, like Michelle Green's (1991) *The Dream at the End of the World: Paul Bowles and the Literary Renegades in Tangier*, Iain Finlayson's (1992) *Tangier: City of the Dream*, or more recently J. V. Stevenson's (2004) *Tangier Twilight*, and Josh Shoemake's *Tangier: A Literary Guide for Travellers* (2013), while also being endlessly replayed in travel guides and tourist publications. At the same time – and more crucially – it also resonates within contemporary political and economic strategies to reposition the city, once more presented as a space of infinite possibility and spatial and regulatory recombination. Indeed, Brion Gysin's artistic and literary technique of the 'cut-up', adopted by Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg and others, is in many ways a great spatial metaphor for the often highly aggressive 'cutting up' of fractions of urbanity, capital, and meaning taking place in Tangier today.

2 The political economies of the 'cut-up city'

Alongside its literary myths, Tangier is attracting international attention today predominantly because of its ambitious projects of economic restructuring, including the creation of an extensive free trade zone, the

completion of the Tanger-Med port, aiming to be the largest container port in the Mediterranean, and large-scale projects of urban renewal that draw on echoes of the city's international and 'cosmopolitan' past. Morocco was a key laboratory for European colonial urban planners (Minca, 2006; Rabinow, 1989) and Tangier is assuming this role today, gaining the attention of some of the world's top planning and design studios such as that of Lord Norman Foster (see the mock-up for Tangier's new cruise ship terminal below, by Foster and the architects Reichen and Robert, Figure 13.1) and featuring in glossy spreads on fashion and design magazines like Monocle ('Summer Issue 7', 2013), Vogue (Bowles, 2013) and T: The New York Times Style Magazine (O'Hagan, 2014). Of course Tangier is not unique in this regard, and similar strategies of neo-liberal urban rebranding have been critically analyzed in other Mediterranean port cities such as, for example, Alexandria (Della Dora, 2006). What *is* perhaps different in the Tangerine context is both the scale and the speed of these transformations, but especially the ways in which they make use of the border and distinct, fractioned 'borderities' to make possible new spaces of capital and new forms of mobility.

Although this chapter will focus on the most recent set of transformations in the city and its surrounding region, many of the processes visible today have their legacy in much longer-standing dynamics. Abandoned by the national-state for decades following Morocco's independence in 1956, Tangier was for many decades penalized for its past as an international city, both symbolically as well as materially, part of a wider abandonment of the north of the country that was considered politically problematic by the previous King, Hassan II (Pennell, 2003). Yet although the state's political and economic patronage was directed largely elsewhere, from the late 1950s on, the city became a hub of the Moroccan textile industry, a key export industry for the country, drawing

Figure 13.1 Tangier's New Marina

in a low-wage and a highly precarious labor force from the surrounding countryside but also the south of the country, a rapid migration that swelled the city in a series of new bidonvilles. This rural to urban migration, that continued in the successive decades and still does today, markedly transformed the demographics of the city, and for many self-styled Tangier 'patriots' and defenders like writer Rachid Taferssiti (Taferssiti, 2009; interview with R. Taferssiti, October 2012), risked dismantling Tangier's unique 'international' urbanity. Yet it is precisely this new, expanded population base that in the eyes of its promoters today is allowing the city to once more attract international investors, to reposition itself again as 'international'.[1]

The effects of migration also transformed the fortunes and urban landscapes of Tangier in another way, however. Besides being the pole of attraction for large numbers of Moroccans from the rural south, Tangier also became a key passage point for the out-migration of Moroccans to Europe, from the 1960s on – whether those leaving as 'guest workers' to Belgium, Germany, or the Netherlands in the 1960s and 1970s, or subsequently those trying to 'jump' the border from the early 1990s on, when countries like France and Spain began to implement visa requirements for Moroccan citizens (who previously could travel freely across the Mediterranean). It is then that Tangier became, as Tangerine visual artist Yto Barrada termed it, 'an existential waiting room' (Barrada, 2005) – or a prison, as Simon-Pierre Hamelin, the current director of the city's mythical *Librairie des Colonnes* noted in an interview with the literary magazine *Nejma*:

> Mon collègue, dans sa jeunesse, allait en Espagne tous les weekends. En pratique, avant, il n'y avait pas frontières entre Tanger et l'Espagne, c'était un peu le même endroit. Puis, plus ou moins à partir de 1985, quand la France a commencé à demander un visa d'entrée (idem pour les autres pays européens), les frontières se sont fermées. Les Tangérois, qui jusqu'alors ne regardaient pas derrière eux, ont dû se retourner, découvrir le Maroc. Ils avaient toujours regardé vers l'Espagne, et désormais, ils devaient découvrir un autre univers. Un changement traumatisant, surtout pour les Tangérois qui avaient la possibilité de voyager. C'est comme si, à l'improviste, ils s'étaient retrouvés prisonniers […] Bien que mitoyenne, Tanger est désormais une ville pleine de murs (Hamelin in Rivera-Magos, 2010).

AQ6 Various scholars have examined the effects of the increasingly more aggressive securitization of the Straits of Gibraltar since the 1990s and

the 'walling-off' of Tangier – most importantly, the sociologists Natalia Ribas-Matteos and Mercedes Jimenez (Ribas-Mateos, 2011) – while others have written extensively on the effects of the EU's border work on the wider region of Northern Morocco, including the two Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla (Driessen, 2007; Ferrer-Gallardo, 2008; Lehtinen, 2008; McMurray, 2001).

The violent effects of such border work need to be kept in mind when examining current attempts to project Tangier as a 'mobile' city. At the same time, however, it is important to note that even as the EU's frontiers became harder and harsher, the city maintained its vocation as a take-off point – for flows of (now increasingly irregularized and dangerous) migration, but also for European capital, and goods travelling to and from Europe. Tangier was the site of the first export Moroccan processing zone/free trade zone already in 1995, as part of a newly launched 'Charte des Investissements'. The Zone was located right next to the port, smack in the center of the city's once gorgeous waterfront corniche. Several of the older generation of Tangier inhabitants that I interviewed lamented indeed the loss of that 'most Mediterranean and European part of the city – its beachfront swimming establishments' (interviews with R. Taferssiti, October 2012; and local entrepreneur F. Kanario, May 2013) to hideous warehouses that now took over the waterfront, many devoted to the processing of fish products for European companies (like the shrimp peelers working for a Dutch conglomerate that Ursula Biemann and Angela Sanders (2003) captured in their video-account *Europlex*.

The crucial shift that began to transform the fortunes of the city (from beyond being simply another off-shore, out-sourcing site for European companies) arrived, however, in the late 1990s, with the coming to the throne in 1999 of the current monarch, King Mohammed VI, when the city 're-appeared' on the national and international stage. Tangier found itself all of a sudden projected as the spearhead of a comprehensive project of economic and administrative reform by the new King who envisioned it as a key pivot in re-positioning Morocco within a new 'Euro-Mediterranean' space. As various scholars have argued (See among others Kanai & Kutz, 2011; Zemni & Bogaert, 2009), this was made possible by a number of new institutional arrangements and 'openings', creating new conditions of possibility for a series of hybrid governance arrangements that would have been previously unthinkable. A new urban governor was appointed, but Tangier was also 're-set' within a new regional structure – the new Tanger–Tetouan administrative region – created specifically with the aim of linking the city more firmly

with its hinterland and 'creating new economic synergies' (Ministère de l'Intérieur (Maroc), 2011). The aforementioned Tanger-Med port was an important part of these new territorial strategies, as were the plans for other grand-scale logistical works – such as the TGV connection with Paris that is currently in the works. All of these interventions were aimed at making the city and its region not just better able to attract investment and more 'competitive', but overall better able to 'dialogue with the European space' (interview with the Tanger-Med Development Agency (TMSA) director M. Doukkali, October 2012).

Tangier and the Tanger–Tetouan regional administration thus attracted (and created) a new cadre of urban-regional entrepreneurs, outside of the formal structures of municipal politics, many picked and appointed directly by the King – a cadre of new 'techno-walis' as Zemni and Bogaert (2009) have termed them. Together with the openings provided by a number of decrees further liberalizing investment in the city and its surrounding area, the sort of fragmented, enclavic urbanism that already appeared with the free trade zone in the 1990s was 'turbo charged' (interview with Tangier writer/political activist M. Serifi, October 2012), creating what Zemni and Bogaert (2009) have called 'islets of economic exception' – or what Michel Peraldi (2007) more bluntly characterizes as Tangier's 'criminal economies' – that find in the border their necessary condition(s) of possibility.

In his introduction to a special issue of *Actes Sud* entitled 'Tanger Ville Frontiere' (2008), Peraldi, a long-time resident of Tangier, described the city as 'transnational' in that it 'exceeds, spills over the [limits of the] national'. In his essay (or 'subjective chronicle' of the city, as he characterized it) Peraldi described a city and urban actors that play with the possibilities afforded by 'spilling over' the border, through a variety of scale-jumping strategies, both legal and illegal. Indeed, for him, this sort of fluid slippage between national spaces and between regulatory regimes (or their subversion) is a mark of the transnational nature of the city: 'c'est cela aussi le transnational, se glisser dans les plis des lois' (Peraldi, 2008, p. 9).

This sort of selective and creative 'slippage' in between legal and regulatory regimes is a prominent feature of this border-space and I believe the concept of 'borderities' presented in the introduction to this volume can be very fruitfully applied to characterize such strategies as technologies of the re-making of spaces and spatial divisions *ad hoc*, frequently on a project by project, investor by investor basis, with anything from customs regulations to zoning restrictions suspended or creatively re-interpreted. The border is thus made and un-made at will, made

mobile both internally and externally – with the creation of extra-territorial 'islets' such as for instance Chrafate, the gated 'new town' 18 kilometers from Tangier created for the workers (many of whom are Spaniards or other EU citizens) of the giant Renault-Dacia factory in Melloussa, inaugurated in 2012 (Marot, 2012). The city, planned and built under the auspices of the state-directed Al Omrane Group, is envisioned to house 150,000 inhabitants by 2020, and just like the Renault plant itself, will be directly linked to the Tanger-Med port and thus 'to Europe' via a new rail link and highway (communication of the Agence pour la Promotion et le Developpement du Nord, 2013 – see Figure 13.2 below of the Tanger-Med port, with new Renault cars waiting to be shipped out).

3 Tangier, the Euro-Mediterranean

What makes such creative territorial re-fashionings on the part of local elites even more interesting from a political geographic point of view, however, is that they are mirrored and accompanied – and indeed *themselves mirror* – attempts by EU actors to re-territorialize this border-space.

Morocco – and the Tangier–Tetouan region especially – is increasingly being envisioned by the European Union as a key laboratory in building a 'Euro-Mediterranean region' and for experimenting non-accession forms of regional economic and political integration. The bulk of these have come under the auspices of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) but also, more recently, through the Union for the Mediterranean, first conjured up by Nicolas Sarkozy in a speech given in Tangier in

Figure 13.2 Tanger-Med port, with Renault cars

October 2007. It is not by chance that Tangier was chosen as the venue for the agenda-setting speech by the then-French President. Beyond its grand (and heavily critiqued) call for a new sort of Euro-Mediterranean collaboration to counter the risk of a 'clash of civilizations' (Bialasiewicz, Giaccaria, Jones, & Minca, 2013) that savvily used the backdrop of the just inaugurated Tanger-Med port, the speech was part of what was primarily an economic collaboration initiative. On this official state visit, Sarkozy was in fact accompanied by 70 top French business executives, and confirmed several billion dollars worth of contracts for French firms in Morocco, including the contract for Renault.

'Economic partnership' of the sort lauded by Sarkozy in 2007 as a necessary condition/precursor to other forms of association and, especially, as the key ingredient to the magic of 'development', has long been a key part of EU visions for the Southern Mediterranean (Jones, 2006, 2011). Successive EU-Morocco Action Plans (European Commission, 2005, 2010, 2013) have indeed emphasized a very distinct set of neo-liberal economic strategies for the country, with 'rewards' in the form of privileged access to the EU's internal market (Kausch, 2010; Martín, 2009). As Bohdana Dimitrova (Dimitrova, 2014) suggests in her perceptive post-colonial analysis of EU-Moroccan relations, the Plans' understanding of what constitutes 'development' in the Moroccan context – and how this latter should be achieved – was fully internalized by the Moroccan state and re-enacted as part of the National Human Development Initiative launched by King Mohammed VI in 2005. As Dimitrova further argues, the NHDI, strongly supported by a variety of EU funding instruments, was seen by many detractors as also (if not predominantly) intended to preclude the emergence of alternative economic projects – most importantly, that propounded by the Moroccan Left and Islamist parties and political movements, that have strongly contested the economic strategies of the state, denounced as neo-colonial.

The role of distinct development agendas in shaping the European Neighbourhood Policy for the Mediterranean has by now been thoroughly examined by countless scholars (see Jones 2006, 2011; Pace, 2007, 2008, 2009), so what I would like to bring attention to here is merely one aspect of such visions, for it is especially relevant in the Tangerine case. It is the particular idiom of 'partnership' and 'friendship' that has marked the ENP since its inception, invoking a 'shared Euro-Mediterranean space' where the EU should, yes, play a leading role, but in direct 'collaboration' with its southern neighbors – and where, as I and others have suggested elsewhere (see Bialasiewicz, et al. 2013), spatial metaphors of region-building and unfettered flows have predominated.

The Renewed European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP, 2011–2014) launched by the European Commission in May 2011 as a response to the events taking place on the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean further took up this very same trope of 'partnership' and region-making, with the declared aim of creating a Euro-Mediterranean space 'where political cooperation is as close as possible and economic integration is as deep as possible' (European Commission, 2011b, p. 37), under the slogan of a 'Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity' (European Commission, 2011a, p. 2) and a catchy slogan, the 'three M's' of 'Money, Markets and Mobility' promoted by EU External Relations Commissioner Catherine Ashton. While most of the Renewed ENP simply 'renewed' existing agreements, what was 'new' was the now explicit emphasis on 'Mobility' – something that has been a key focus of the most recent agreements, termed 'Privileged Partnerships', put into place by the EU with its southern Mediterranean partners, including Morocco.

Alongside EU support for economic development and new trade privileges and market access, a fundamental part of these new agreements are so-called 'Partnerships for Mobility'. These latter, while opening the EU's doors to North African students and select skilled migrants, also commit states like Morocco and Tunisia to aiding 'EU'rope with the monitoring (and halting) of illegal migration flows. Similar agreements on the policing of migration flows to the EU with individual Member States such as Spain and Italy had already long been in place – so in a sense this is nothing new. What *is* new, however, is that now such border-policing functions have been explicitly written into the text of the formal agreements on partnership with the Commission.

Morocco has in many ways been the EU's model partner country in the region in this regard, has long had provisions related to its role in policing migration framing its political and economic relations with the Union, and is still the only country (since 2008) holding 'Advanced Status' in its Association Agreement. This Agreement, along with specifications designed to bring Moroccan legislation, regulation and standards 'in line' with those of the EU, and distinct measures in the economic sphere aimed at gradual integration into the EU internal market, also highlights the effective management of migration flows' , including 'preventing and combating illegal migration to and from Morocco, and improving cooperation in regard to readmission'. In late 2011, the Agreement was due to be expanded with a new 'Mobility Partnership' focused, as in the Tunisian case, on a combination of selective visa facilitation/liberalization and cooperation in fighting irregular migration.[2] The 'increased mobility'

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offered by the EU was made conditional, however, on the 'prior fulfillment of a certain number of conditions, aimed at contributing to the creation of a secure environment in which the circulation of the persons would take place through regular channels and in accordance with the agreed modalities' (European Commission, 2011a). Termed a 'more for more' approach, the requested conditions included the putting into place of voluntary return and reintegration arrangements; the conclusion of formal readmission agreements with the EU (which would include provisions on the readmission of its own, but also of third-country nationals apprehended on Moroccan territory); enhanced cooperation in the joint surveillance of the Mediterranean sea; and willingness to cooperate with the EU on the identification of its own nationals, for police, judicial, extradition, and readmission purposes (this last provision also included an injunction to 'improve the quality of civil registers and of the identity and travel documents issued') (European Commission, 2011a, 2011c). What is more, the negotiations for the 'Mobility Partnership' came, it is important to note, on the heels of an extended free-trade agreement, including new provisions on fishing and agricultural quotas, but also stipulations on the creation of new free-trade zones and the ability of local and regional authorities to enter directly into 'partnerships' with foreign investors. As I have already hinted above, in Tangier and the wider Tangier–Tetouan administrative region, local elites have savvily captured many of the new economic, political, and regulatory possibilities opened up by these agreements over the past couple of years, playing in particular to the notions of unfettered mobility and direct, uninterrupted flows: flows of goods, (certain) people, and investment.

AQ11

4 Aspirational borderities: imagining perfect flow

If there is one site, one project that most vividly embodies the idealized image of Tangier as a 'mobile city' it is certainly the pharaonic project of the Tanger-Med port, now in its second phase of construction/expansion. The explicit aim of the Moroccan authorities with the construction of the port was, as social anthropologist Zoubir Chattou (2011, p. 135) notes in his analysis of the geographical imaginations underpinning the recent *grands projets*, to *désenclaver* Tangier, to allow it to recapture its 'geographical vocation' as a maritime and continental 'cross-roads'. The Moroccan state invested over 1.5 million euro initially into the construction of the port, but the project was from the outset fundamentally an international one, drawing in investors from both Europe as well as the Gulf States.

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The role of foreign actors and foreign capital in managing flows in the Straits of Gibraltar is hardly new. In the 19th century, the Cap Spartel lighthouse that stands on the promontory marking the traditionally accepted 'boundary' between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic was administered by the leading international powers of the day. The terms of the 1865 convention that was signed by the representatives of the United States, Italy, Austria–Hungary, the Netherlands, Belgium, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Norway, France, and the United Kingdom with the Kingdom of Morocco, committed the international partners to contribute payments for the upkeep of the lighthouse in order to ensure the smooth traffic and safety of commercial and military vessels through the Straits. Already some years earlier, in 1840, the then-Sultan had allowed foreign powers to establish a Sanitary Council in the city, which could check incoming maritime traffic for disease (Viehoff, 2009). The Council continued to expand its role in subsequent years and in 1891 an International Health Commission was created, taking over the responsibilities of the earlier Council, together with much further-ranging powers that included municipal sanitation and street cleaning, but also the establishment of a police force and even vaccination campaigns, thus taking under its aegis the control of not just maritime but also territorial 'flows' (including the provision of a clean water supply). As Viehoff (2009, pp. 142–144) and other urban geographers and historians of Tangier have argued, in the absence of any other formal municipal authority, the Health Commission became the de facto administrative power governing the city, until the creation of the International Zone with the Statute of Tangier of 1924. Several of the international powers also set up their own postal services and post-offices in the city, in order to make possible (but also control) regular communication between this 'African outpost' and Europe.

The administration and control of all flows in and through the city and its port became indeed a key part of the Statute of Tangier, signed at the end of 1923 and that came into effect in 1925, establishing the city as an International Zone (Landau, 1952). Just as the aforementioned Health Commission was made up of representatives of the various foreign powers and other foreign residents of the city, so too the provisions of the Statute, as Pennell (2003, p. 154) argues, 'gave virtually every European state, and the USA, a role in administering the city' and, above all, in ensuring its status as a zone of free trade and passage.

(Re)evocations of these distinct geographical imaginations of the city from the period of the International Zone mark in important ways attempts to *désenclaver* Tangier today, to make it a key locus for

the control and passage of Mediterranean and Atlantic, European and African flows. In her work on the operationalization of the Tanger-Med port, anthropologist Janell Rothenberg (2013) describes how the choice of locating the port in Morocco was based in large part on an imagined (or, as she terms it, 'aspirational') geography of 'frictionless flows'. Such smoothness of flow was to be enabled by Tanger-Med's (imagined) location *both within and beyond* the Moroccan space. On the one hand, then, the port's control and administration by international investors and its insertion into a global logistical infrastructure linking this port with facilities in both southern and northern Europe (and further afield still) would ensure free-flowing traffic. On the other, its location in Morocco would provide the port with a cheap and, crucially, non-unionized labor force. As Rothenberg (2013) argues, Tanger-Med in its role as a trans-shipment facility (that is, an intermediary node between the port of the origin of the shipped goods and its final destinations) was to assure a smoothness of operations that was always at risk in the union-organized ports of Europe. As she notes, the trans-shipment of goods is now key to maritime logistics, in part due to the increasing reliance on mega-ships that are too big and costly to dock at all destinations, but also due to the relocation of shipping nodes away from the more expensive, land-limited and strike prone ports of North America and Europe, and to the coasts of the Global South. Tanger-Med was thus to be a smooth 'switching-point', administered from beyond but at the same time taking advantage of 'territorial attributes' (interview with TMSA director M. Doukkali, October 2012).

To further 'link up' and *désenclaver* the port, the construction of Tanger-Med was paired with an ambitious project of highway construction, cutting across the surrounding countryside (see Figure 13.3). The highway was to link Tangier's and the region's new free trade zones directly with the port, facilitating the transport of both goods and labor. The construction of this new toll road was strongly contested, however, not only for the forced expropriation and expulsion of countless inhabitants of the rural areas it traverses, but also for the fact that the much lauded 'connectivity' it was to make possible was reserved only for the very few. Indeed, hardly anyone can afford its toll charges, so most of the local traffic, including commercial traffic, continues to clog the old coastal road – while the new highway soars above, the 'road to nowhere' as locals call it. But since all traffic (both commercial and passenger ferry traffic, beyond a couple of tourist connections to the Spanish surfer town of Tarifa) has been relocated from the city center to the new port, everyone must now make the 35 kilometer journey to Tanger-Med to

Figure 13.3 New highway leading to the Tanger-Med port

leave Tangier – something that has, paradoxically, become much more difficult and expensive for most Moroccans.

The fractioned and exclusionary nature of the mobilities enabled by the construction of the new port is just one of the contradictions plaguing its idealized image as a locus of unfettered flow and the symbol of a new Tangier as an open Euro-Mediterranean crossroads. Despite the hope of the port's investors that it would somehow be AQ13 immune to the labor organizing that plagues its sister ports in southern Europe, Tanger-Med was paralyzed by numerous protests and sit-ins from the beginning – both by port workers (who did begin to organize) but also by other local actors subjected to the disruption wreaked by the construction of the port and its surrounding infrastructure. The port, imagined ideally as a disembodied node of global logistics was thus repeatedly ensnared in the messiness of the local. Rothenberg's ethnographic fieldwork in the port highlights countless other 'frictions' in the idealized geography of flows, that 'could range on a given day from leaking containers to dockworker strikes, from the mis-entry of container weights to the particular fierceness of the winds across the Straits of Gibraltar' (2013, p. 6). In these instances, the port became more of a 'sticking point' than the smooth node or 'Eurogate' it is promoted as being.

In his analysis of the imagined geographies of global logistics, AQ14 Rockefeller (2011, p. 566) notes that 'like much modelling terminology, "flow" works by elision; it enables one to glide over variety, scale, and agency in order to focus on the formal, the large and the systemic. "Flow" is action seen from high above'. In the case of Tanger-Med,

the 'aspirational' geographies of seamless flow promoted by the port authority have been precisely that: to use Ó Tuathail's (1996) term, a de-territorialized 'God's Eye View', attempting to re-inscribe Tangier and its region as a node of flows, *in but also beyond the Moroccan space*.

5 A model/mobile Mediterranean city?

The 'aspirational mobilities' of the Tanger-Med mega-port are not the only idealized spaces of unfettered flows linking the city to European shores and the rest of the Mediterranean. Tangier is increasingly making its way into the imagined geographies of a 'global Mediterranean' of high style and leisure. As part of the summer 2013 'Mediterranean Issue' of the fashion/design magazine *Brown Book,* the self-appointed 'Urban Guide to the Middle East', the magazine (published in Dubai) included a little children's book entitled 'From Tangier to Beirut: The Voyage of Prince Ahmed'. The book, made up of cut-outs and created by Zid Zid Kids, a husband and wife creative team based in Tangier (www.zidzid.com), traces the voyage of the imaginary Prince across a glistening Mediterranean, from Tangier, to Algiers, Marseille, Monaco, Tripoli, Alexandria, Gaza City, Cyprus, and Beirut, encountering various sea creatures along the way, from a painted lady butterfly outside of Tangier, to dolphins off the coast of Gaza (see Figure 13.4). It is certainly an interesting way to disrupt the violent geopolitical realities of this killing sea and its hard confines – but also feeds into the high-gloss imaginary of an 'earlier' Mediterranean, peopled by the cruising leisure class, not the smugglers of desperate migrants or the patrol vessels of the current Frontex missions.

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The soon to be launched MS Monocolo luxury cruise line, created by the company behind fashion magazine *Monocle*, also boasts of Tangier as the setting-off point for its first route, an itinerary that then

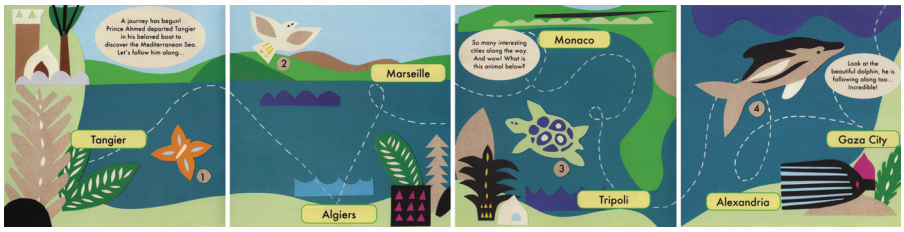

Figure 13.4 'The Voyage of Prince Ahmed'

continues to Palma de Mallorca, St. Tropez, Nice, and Portofino. These exclusive cruises, as *Monocle* boasts, are aimed at 'restoring faith in ferry hopping around the Med' and are accompanied by an extensive advertising campaign that 'takes its cue from 1950s airline posters, promoting the glamor and comfort of the onboard experience, together with the thrilling prospect of reaching the previously unreachable' (Monocle, AQ17 2013, p. 28).

This particular imagined geography of Tangier – in Monocle's mapping (re)inserted into an idyllic itinerary of an erstwhile Grand Tour (indeed, another article on the same issue of the magazine charts the destinations AQ18 of today's Med 'Grand Tour', Tangier among them – 2013 , p. 34) – feeds upon a much longer standing imagination of the Mediterranean as a space of freedom, openness, leisure, and 'endless promise' for European pleasure seekers, an imaginary that anthropologist Michael Herzfeld (2005) characterized some time ago with the label of 'Mediterraneanism'. And just as for Edward Said's 'Orientalism', Herzfeld's 'Mediterraneanism' similarly implies not just a distinct geographical imagination of the Mediterranean in Western European eyes but also 'a program of active political engagement with patterns of political hierarchy' (Herzfeld, 2005, p. 51).

The Mediterranean, in Herzfeld's analysis, is thus selectively located outside of time, marked by a distinct chronopolitics that allows it to be inscribed into multiple visions and projects, that play with visions of both past 'heritage' and future 'possibility'. The 'aspirational' re-mapping of Tangier today as a Euro-Mediterranean gateway is made possible precisely by this sort of creative play with Brion Gysin-like 'cut-ups' of time and space, whether enacted in the political and economic strategies of the local authorities, or the wider cultural re-branding/commodification of the city. In both cases, it is a highly selective process that relies upon the fragmentation of spaces and the delimitation of who has access to them, where, and how – and thus relies fundamentally upon the making of borders, upon a distinct set of 'borderities'.

One of the refrains chanted by the demonstrators of the February 20th Movement in the protests that swept the streets of Tangier in the spring of 2011 was: 'two seas, two seas, and our country is in misery'.[3] It is a fitting refrain to capture the profoundly contradictory and fractured condition of opportunity and entrapment, mobility and closure, granted by the city's location at the cusp of the sea(s), at the gates of Europe.

Notes

1. Though such claims are strongly contested by locals and the local press such as the *Journal de Tanger*, where various editorial interventions and letters have lamented that most of the employees of the new factories – or of the new port – are recent migrants from the country's South.
2. http://www.enpi-info.eu/medportal/news/delegation/26724/EU-takes-another-stride-towards-mobility-partnership-with-Morocco
3. Or, in another version: 'Two seas, two seas, but even the sardines are expensive' – see the account of the protests by Hannoum, 2013.

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