

Towards a Comparative History of the Modern Mediterranean, 1750-1919

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Mediterranean Modernities: Finding the Way Forward

The Mediterranean is a research space long established in classical studies, and to a lesser extent in anthropology. Yet despite Braudel's magisterial two volume work, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* there has been surprisingly little scholarly work that takes it seriously as a zone of historical interaction, or as a laboratory in which to view how that ubiquitous thing "the modern" emerged within the Mediterranean.¹ While the Mediterranean is the place where European, Muslim and African civilizations converge, most authors have tended to emphasize the boundaries between civilizations, not their histories of interaction. Clearly the fact that the region is one of more than a dozen important languages, each with their own literatures, has inhibited the emergence of broader perspectives. So too has nationalism, which has fostered the development of multiple tunnel-vision histories, while undermining attempts to see across cultural and political boundaries. While important, these factors only begin to explain why Braudel's project of a comparative history of the Mediterranean died stillborn. Most crucial was the shadow cast by colonialism, which divides the Mediterranean into two allegedly monolithic blocs: the Christian and the Muslim Mediterraneans. The cultural struggle within today's Europe over the presence of large Muslim populations is for Braudel but the tip of a vast iceberg of mutual incomprehension. Related to this is the way in which northern Europeans have tended to view even the societies of southern Spain, France, Italy and the Balkans through orientalist spectacles. The result has been to distort not only the histories of the colonized peoples of the Muslim parts of the Mediterranean, but also those of Mediterranean Europe.

This paper represents an effort to bridge the gap between mutual incomprehensions, and to reimagine the Mediterranean as a zone of comparative historical inquiry. The Mediterranean is one place where an interdisciplinary approach can help us make headway against both the dominant state-centered nationalist narratives by which the different societies of the region have told their stories, as well as against the orientalist representations that still durably intervene to cloud our understanding. Historians, literary scholars, art historians, social scientists all have perspectives that can mutually enrich one another. Where a particular disciplinary or regional literature leaves off, others can intervene to provide new questions, new sources of intellectual stimulation. Recently historians have shown some signs of interest in reviving the Braudelian project. But for Horden and Purcell, British medievalists whose *Corrupting Sea* is

the most ambitious of recent attempts, this takes the form of a systematic avoidance of master narratives, for fear of tumbling into the vice of orientalism.² My approach here is in some respects the opposite: to “world” the transformations of the Mediterranean, instead of breaking it into micro-ecological segments. Efforts to examine the modern period remain few, and have been mostly limited to the eastern Mediterranean.³

The Mediterranean is central to the process of Europe's re-invention. As the first recipient of the 19th century liberal reform project in its political and economic forms, it was therefore also the site from which to begin the process of rethinking European modernities (in the plural). For some, it may also be a place to observe the ways in which Europe is being transformed today. For all these reasons we find the Mediterranean an important site for research and reflection in our present conjuncture. That this task is an urgent one is clear from a consideration of the ravages of divisive nationalisms in the recent past and the rise of various forms of Islamism in the present. As the proportion of Muslims steadily increases in the new Europe, the need for a “Europe” that generously incorporates the southern and eastern ends of the Mediterranean (perhaps even the interior of Africa) has increasingly made itself felt. However, due to the persistence of European racism and the legacy of colonialism, the political project of integrating the Mediterranean to the new Europe remains stalled. Arab suspicions of European motives in calling for a new Mediterranean (and the persistence of European racism, as well as European hegemonic aspirations) remain all too obvious. If the Mediterranean is to be only a European “security zone,” then sincere Arab and Muslim partners will be difficult to find.

A central problem in writing about the Mediterranean is that its history has been primarily written by northern Europeans. For example, as Marie-Noelle Bourguet and her collaborators have noted, the invention of the Mediterranean as an object of study dates from eighteenth century Enlightenment thinkers.⁴ It was the Napoleonic expedition to Egypt in 1798 that for the first time enabled Europeans to imagine the Mediterranean as a scientific laboratory (a conception closely bound to French imperialist aspirations of the time). The Saint-Simonian technocratic vision of a Mediterranean made modern by French capital and know-how continues to inspire contemporary Euro-Mediterranean discourse.⁵ In view of this prior history, thinking about “Mediterranean modernities” from the vantage point of the Muslim Mediterranean must inevitably appear a quixotic project. Either it seems a naive exercise in denying history (the history of colonialism), or a cynical effort to annex the histories of the modern Muslim Mediterranean to the progress-oriented narrative of the new European globalization. The project of Mediterranean modernities carries a lot of historical baggage.

Northern Europeans typically came to the cultures and peoples of the region with a set of agendas and expectations that shaped the histories and anthropologies they wrote. We need to be alert to the existence of these agendas, and of the ways they continue to deform our own vision even as we seek to place the Mediterranean in its world historical contexts. The problem of orientalism is thus more encompassing than previously imagined. For not only the denizens of

the Muslim Mediterranean were inspected by the lens of power, and not only under conditions of colonial rule. As Jane Schneider's *Italy's "Southern Question"* argues, the lens of power has significantly deformed knowledge about southern Italy as well.⁶ Much the same can be said about southern Spain, Portugal and Greece. Moreover, once internalized, orientalist discourse became a self-lacerating search for "what went wrong." Throughout the region, local intellectuals became obsessed by the ways in which their society failed to measure up to northern European models of modernity. Orientalist histories operate as if the West was fated to achieve modernity thanks to its superior cultural attainments (the Greeks, science, democracy and such) while other societies as a result of their inferior culture remain trapped in the realm of the traditional, leaving the South (pick a South, any South) as the realm of tradition and stasis.

The present intervention is an attempt to rethink the place of regional histories in world history using the Mediterranean as an example. As a historian of Mediterranean Islam as well as of modern Europe, I believe that a comparative history of Mediterranean modernities can provide a number of benefits.⁷ By relocating the experience of colonialism in the Mediterranean within the larger story of the hegemony of northwestern Europe over the region, some important commonalities come into view, and well known differences between the "Christian" and "Muslim" Mediterraneans take on a different hue. When viewed in a broad comparative context, such a study may make it possible to discern the existence of Mediterranean models of economic modernity appropriate to Mediterranean conditions. Finally, a comparative study of the Mediterranean may allow us to perceive the blocked narrative of Muslim modernity in a different light. Sufficiently capacious as to be deprovincializing of core narratives, but sufficiently limited in range and extent as to enable plausible comparisons: the Mediterranean is such an area. Thus, for example, it has the potential to weaken the power of the northern European narratives and to weaken the power of ubiquitous culturalist explanations for the backwardness of the region, such as amoral familism (Banfield), patronage networks, or religion.⁸ Bad culture (amoral familism, Islam, take your pick) there's the problem! But if this were so, then how can we explain the common historical experience of all Mediterranean countries from 1500 to 1800? While culture no doubt is usefully invoked as one element in an historical explanation, it is by no means the full story.

Where is the Mediterranean? The question, apparently innocent, leads us away from the familiar Inner Sea of the classical era and toward the realization that it depends upon when and why we ask the question. Rather than a fixed space, we imagine a Mediterranean with differing modalities (*à géométrie variable*). In a striking metaphor Braudel called for us to imagine a Mediterranean opened to the Sahara and the West African interior. In a similar spirit, given the well attested connections (cultural, economic and political) between the eastern Mediterranean civilizations and those of the Indus Valley, world historian Ross E. Dunn has suggested that it may be useful to imagine the rise of the classical civilizations of antiquity as occurring in the supra-regional space he calls *Indo-Mediterranea*.⁹ With the Iberian voyages at the end of the fifteenth century, the

Mediterranean increasingly opened into (and was subsequently subsumed by) the emergent Atlantic world even as Mediterranean cultural, economic and political institutions crucially shaped the New World (including shaping the slave trade in important ways). We are all familiar with the way Mediterranean institutions helped shape the emergent culture of modernity in northwestern Europe. Finally, with the opening of the Suez Canal (1869), the onset of steamship navigation and the laying of the telegraph cables that linked Europe with the world, we arrive at the Mediterranean of modern times. At this point we might ask, in what sense is the concept of the Mediterranean still useful? I would reply that it depends upon what you are interested in explaining. By expanding the frame we are able to imagine how the migrations of Mediterranean workers (especially Italians) gave rise in the early twentieth century of an “anarchist Atlantic” (Jose Moya), and how the closely the emergence of the middle class in many parts of the region (Spain, Sicily and Lebanon come to mind) were linked to the migrations of the late nineteenth century.¹⁰ So one important intellectual move in imagining the way in which the Mediterranean came to modernity is to leave behind older more static notions of a Mediterranean frozen in time and space in favor for a more open and extensible idea of the region.

Mediterranean Modernities: A Deep Historical Approach

In order to understand why the Mediterranean as a world region (and not just the Muslims parts) was economically marginalized during the long sixteenth century, we need to view it in its global context. To do so we need to insert the Mediterranean into the deep history of Eurasia. From this perspective, one can notice a family resemblance among the states and empires that emerged in Eurasia from China to the Mediterranean from c. 1500 B.C.E. The origins of agriculture, cities and civilizations mark the transition of humanity to a new phase, the Agrarian Age, which Braudel called the Biological Old Regime.¹¹ Periods of prosperity in which populations burgeoned, agricultural production soared and trade flourished were followed by periodic subsistence crises in which famines and disease provoked downturns. In effect, the Biological Old Regime governed human affairs from the first millennium B.C.E. until c. 1750 C.E. But already starting around 1450 C.E. some changes can be observed. Human populations across Eurasia expanded at a faster rate, states developed new military and organizational capabilities and communications capabilities (printing as well as transportation) developed in unprecedented ways. As the changes pyramided, states that were able to adapt to the new conditions of warfare, commerce and communications achieved unprecedented power. Although these changes were hemisphere-wide, they were particularly important in China, where the Ming dynasty (1367-1644) had just replaced the Mongol Yuan (1280-1367), in India under the Mughals (1526-1707) and in Western Europe (just emerging from the Black Death). To fully comprehend what occurred, it is useful to compare the ecohistorical predicament and specific strategies of Mediterranean states with those of China, India and Europe on the eve of modernity. Here is where a global and environmental perspective has much to offer.

Let's begin by examining the ecohistorical context in which the Mediterranean region came to modernity. By 1450 C.E., the ecological constraints on growth were emerging in states all across Eurasia. Kenneth L. Pomeranz has argued that China (we might add India) and Western Europe pursued contrasting approaches to the growing ecological limitations.¹² Western Europe's solution to the contradictions of population increase and ecological over-shoot was to exploit its maritime advantage through overseas expansion, as a result of which it achieved levels of wealth and power well beyond Agrarian Age norms. Europe's overseas colonies provided a strategic advantage in the new global struggle for empire and resources, the availability of colonial raw materials (above all the silver of the Americas) allowed it to participate in the new global market from a position of strength. First Europe muscled in on the Asian spice trade, then as the sugar revolution (1650-1800) transformed the Atlantic economy by linking Africa, the Americas and Europe, it was able to channel profits from the slave trade and sugar production in the Caribbean into an unprecedented source of economic growth. The emergence of a truly global market in spices, sugar and other commodities did not lead to a definitive break with the material limitations on growth that had characterized the agrarian age, however. But it did allow Western Europe to transcend at least some of the limitations of its ecological situation.

In this regard the ecohistorical situation of the Mediterranean region makes an interesting contrast to China, India and Western Europe.¹³ Situated at the junction point of Asia, Africa and Europe, the Mediterranean region as a whole long enjoyed a central position in the topology of exchange within the eastern hemisphere. Well-endowed in agricultural and (initially) forest resources, the region contained the earliest centers of agriculture and civilization. The vigor and dynamism of the complex social forms that flourished within the Mediterranean facilitated a sustained interchange between agricultural, mercantile and pastoralist societies. For millennia the prosperity of the region was assured by the social power inherent in large well-organized populations exploiting a varied resource base and exploiting a central position in the currents of exchange within Afroeurasia. All this changed around 1450 A.C.E. when for complex reasons it is useful to briefly detail, the Mediterranean became increasingly undermined by secular as well as conjunctural vectors of change and began to lose momentum.

The cumulative secular decline in agricultural productivity within Mediterranean region as a whole (especially severe in the Fertile Crescent) marks a first aspect of the predicament of Mediterranean societies. This was nothing new. Primarily a consequence of irreversible processes of siltation and salination consequent to the introduction of irrigation, the decline in agricultural productivity was already evident by Roman times.¹⁴ As agricultural productivity gradually slowed and even reversed, the population of the Mediterranean, which in 500 B.C.E had been more than double that of China (42 vs 19 million) was by 1000 C.E already falling behind (56 million vs. 33 million for the Middle East alone)¹⁵. By 1500, China and India had vastly larger and more dynamic populations (c. 84 million and 95 million respectively, versus c. 65 million in the Mediterranean region). What I am calling Western Europe had a population in

1500 of c. 45 million). By 1800, China had four times the population of the Mediterranean (c. 330 vs. 80 million) while Europe's (c. 104 million) was almost double that of the Mediterranean region. The causes of this growing demographic divide are complex. In addition to the secular trends alluded to above, they include important changes in land use, consequent to the increased role of pastoralist production relative in the post-Mongol (and post-Black Death) period. Fernand Braudel was the first to note that the rise of pastoralist economic interests after 1500 (notably the wool trade) was a region-wide Mediterranean phenomenon.¹⁶ As pastoralist power increased, agricultural lands were taken out of cultivation and land tax revenues declined. While the rise of the social power of pastoralism is also observable in India and China in the same period, it was especially important in the Mediterranean region. This would have long-term consequences for the future.

Table 1: World Populations by Regions: 500 BCE-CE 1900

Date	Region (Millions)				World
	China	S. Asia	Mediterranean	NW Europe	
500 BCE	19	30	60	29	153
0	70	46	75	23	252
500 CE	32	33	67	15	207
1000 CE	56	40	57	15	253
1500 CE	89	95	50	49	461
1600	110	145	65	69	578
1700	150	175	65	90	680
1800	330	180	70	125	954
1900	415	290	103	137	1634

Source: McEvedy & Jones eds., *Atlas of World Population History* and Carlo Cipolla ed., *The Fontana History of Europe*, vols. 2-3.

Viewed in ecohistorical perspective there was a second reason for the decline of Mediterranean region relative to the rest of Eurasia: a shortage of forest resources, a basic raw material and an important source of energy for most of human history. Historians tell us that by Roman times (if not before) the forests of the Mediterranean were already significantly depleted.¹⁷ The biomass resources of the region declined further during the Little Ice Age (1350 to 1850 C.E.) due to the prolonged drought conditions that were the region's lot.¹⁸ The

depletion of forest resources affected the Mediterranean two ways: a shortage of building materials, and a slowly building energy crisis both of which became fully apparent after 1500. From this date we can observe all across Eurasia a new dynamism in the rise of early modern states and empires. Their resource needs for warfare, major construction projects (among them vast navies) and wood / charcoal drastically accelerated regional deforestation.¹⁹ To summarize thus far, the Mediterranean region the period 1500-1800 witnessed the regional dominance of the rival Hapsburg and Ottoman empires. In this rivalry the Ottomans were fatally disadvantaged. For unlike the Spanish Hapsburgs, who for a time could draw upon the natural resources (and silver!) of the Americas, the Ottoman empire had neither an inner frontier area to exploit (like China, India and Europe) nor any colonies. As a consequence, by 1800 the Mediterranean region as a whole (and not just the Ottoman zone) faced an incipient energy crisis due to its growing wood shortage.

Attention has recently focused on the impact of major long term climatic shifts in world history such as El Nino and the advance and retreat of glaciers, a third important ecohistorical factor in the eroding of the competitiveness of the Mediterranean versus the other major regions of Eurasia.²⁰ Increasingly historians now recognize the impact of the climate changes attendant upon the Little Ice Age (1300-1850) on late medieval and early modern Europe.²¹ Glaciers re-formed in the Alps (and other major European mountain chains), unprecedented periods of freezing temperature were noted, and the growing season became shorter. More recently attention has turned the impact of the Little Ice Age onto the Mediterranean region. In *The Waning of the Mediterranean*, historian Faruk Tabak argues that the Little Ice Age had a cumulatively devastating impact upon Mediterranean agriculture, as torrential rains destroyed irrigation works, and swamped coastlands became the site of endemic malaria. When combined with contemporary political changes (the decline of empires and the rise of piracy in the seventeenth century) it led to the long-term depopulation of large swathes of the Mediterranean coast.²²

More important still in the relative decline of the Mediterranean region after 1450 is the transformation in its place in the topology of the world economy. For millennia, the Mediterranean region had profited greatly from its position astride the trade routes linking Inner Asia, South and Southeast Asia and the Western Europe. However even before the voyages of discovery at the end of the 15th century, the Indian Ocean was already emerging as a larger and more important Mediterranean.²³ The European navigation revolution of the sixteenth century led to the emergence of the Atlantic as the center of the emergent world economy, and subordinated the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean systems to it. The rise of a capitalist world economy centered upon the Atlantic was a major world historical development. It transformed the place of the Mediterranean in the emergent global system of exchanges in three major ways. First, from a central role in the exchange of goods, ideas, and people within Afroeurasia, the Mediterranean became increasingly marginal to the new global communications network. The land transport advantages of the region (via the Middle Eastern caravan trade) became redundant, while its fading dominance of the internal seas of Eurasia made it increasingly irrelevant in the new age of oceanic

transport.²⁴ Second, as Europeans acquired direct access to American silver and West African gold, they marginalized the Muslim-dominated trans-Saharan routes that had previously been an important source of gold for Europe. Third, American silver and West African gold allowed Europeans to participate in the global market.²⁵ The discovery of the Americas provided Spain in a period of sharpened competition between the Hapsburgs and the Ottomans. Although the Hapsburgs were initially able to profit from their American empire at the expense of the Ottomans and enjoyed untrammelled access to the resources of the Americas including mining, timber, and vast agricultural lands this was not fated to last. The cumulatively ruinous expense of the sixteenth century wars of the Hapsburgs and Ottomans ultimately worked to the advantage of the British, Dutch and French, who were better able to navigate the increasing cost curve of the fiscal/military revolution.²⁶ In the longer term perspective, as Pomeranz has argued, access to colonies provided crucial advantages to Western Europe. The Mediterranean region, already suffering from a relative shortage of forest resources and agriculturally depleted from millennia of intense cultivation was without a viable alternative strategy. With the emergence of a global world economy, the Mediterranean became increasingly sidelined.

Already put in an untenable position by its demographic decline and its reduced place in the topology of global exchanges, the Mediterranean region suffered a third major setback as a result of changing ecohistorical conditions. Around 1550 Britain (Western Europe a century later) found itself facing a looming energy crisis caused by rapidly increasing deforestation. The crisis threatened to jeopardize the remarkable economic growth that had accompanied the establishment of the colonial empires in the Americas, maritime Asia and Africa. Just at this point the fortuitous discovery of abundant deposits of coal located adjacent to northwestern Europe's water transport network sparked the transition from biomass energy to fossil fuels. As a result, the previous environmental limits on economic growth were burst asunder and an unprecedented new relationship of humans to the environment was forged.

Fortuitously, just at this point, a new global energy regime appeared. It was to prove as significant for humanity as the mastery of fire and the discovery of farming.²⁷ No longer limited to the availability of biomass, human and animal energy, humans acquired vast capabilities never before known. It was the dawn of the Age of Coal (and its essential correlate, steam power). The new energy regime proved crucial for the subsequent course of human development, placing humans in an altogether different relationship with the environment.²⁸ Access to fossil fuels (in the first instance coal) became critical to the industrial revolution (without which indeed the latter is unimaginable). Northwestern Europe's privileged access to coal (and its location conveniently near its water transport network) was to shape global ecohistorical conditions in the long nineteenth century (1750-1918), and thereafter. Absent fossil fuels, the material limits upon growth of the solar energy regime would inevitably have asserted themselves to muffle and delay the installation of the industrial revolution.

How did the advent of the age of fossil fuels and steam power play out in the Mediterranean? Already poorly endowed in wood, the Mediterranean's

transition to industrialization in the long nineteenth century was greatly handicapped by the absence of significant deposits of coal. As a result the Mediterranean was a major loser in the transition of the early modern period. Although today the Middle East is a major player in the world energy game, it had to sit out Phase I of the fossil fuel revolution (the Age of Coal). As there is little coal in the Ottoman domains, and not much more in Italy, Spain and Greece, it was only when the fossil fuel revolution moved on from Phase I (coal) to Phase II (petroleum and natural gas), that the situation of the region changed (which helped those with petroleum, but not those without). But by this time European imperial powers dominated the region, so the oil of the Middle East was not “theirs” to dispose of as they saw fit, but instead was controlled by multi-national corporations.

The burden of the foregoing is that we do not need to seek cultural explanations for the decline of the Mediterranean region after 1500. All the will in the world and all the good capitalist intentions could not compensate for centuries of demographic decline, agricultural downturn and deforestation. The undermining of agriculture by the Little Ice Age further weakened the position of the Mediterranean in world terms. Nor could Mediterraneans find an escape hatch from their reduced position of in the topology of global exchange. Nor, finally, could they atone for the fact that when Mother Nature was distributing her goodies, the Mediterranean came up short in the coal department. Because it lacked both the ecological resources and the strategic position to make the transition to the new ecohistorical context of the age of fossil fuels, the Mediterranean was one of the major regional losers within Eurasia since 1500. The recounting of this history necessarily leads to a re-problematization of the work of culture in Mediterranean “backwardness.” After 1500 the entire region, and not just part of it, was “underdeveloped.” Increasingly semi-peripheral with respect to the Atlantic-centered world capitalist system and characterized by weak state structures, delayed or muffled class formation, agrarian backwardness and the persistence of pastoralism. The coming to modernity of the Mediterranean makes it an ideal vantage point from which to assess the costs and consequences of the transformation of northern Europe. As well, the internal unity within diversity foreshadows the historical experience of what used to be called the Third World.

Towards a Deep Cultural History of the Mediterranean

Despite the appearance of divergences in the paths pursued by individual states within the Mediterranean region, a deep cultural filiation can be perceived to underlie the paths by which the Mediterranean came to modernity. Viewed from East Asia, the Mediterranean appears as one place, with one history, not several. It is a region shaped by the heritage of ancient empires, by Hellenism (“Greek Thought”) and monotheism (the Chinese word *hui hui* refers to Western monotheists, not just Muslims). Should the sword and the scepter (the state and religion) be united? Jews, Christians and Muslims have struggled amongst themselves over this question for millennia. What should be the relation between a revealed scripture and rational thought? Again, in somewhat different forms,

the question occurs in all three religious traditions. The heritage of Roman law embraced the entire region and left historical residues in the religious laws of Islam, Christianity and Judaism.

Cultural explanations of Mediterranean backwardness are widespread. The national histories of most Mediterranean states tend to explain their delayed modernization to cultural weaknesses (among others, amoral familism, patron/clientage, religion) internal to their respective national histories.²⁹ This predilection for internalist accounts connects the modern histories of Mediterranean states to those of the rest of the Third World. One reason for the repeated recourse to cultural explanation lies in the continuing power of the myth of the European miracle, according to which the “rise of the West” derived from the superiority of Western culture (science and rationalism).³⁰ Societies that failed to conform to this pattern were suspected of being culturally defective. In the post-9/11 world such civilizational thinking unfortunately has enjoyed a renewed life. Thus Samuel P. Huntington has argued that the divisions between rich and poor states in modern world are best explained as a clash of civilizations.³¹ Similarly, Bernard Lewis’ *What Went Wrong* finds the explanation of Middle Eastern backwardness in Islam (rather than the complex legacy of colonialism and petroleum politics).³² At this point we have left the realm of history for that of ideology. Clearly we must look elsewhere for a more satisfactory explanation.

One place to begin this task is by noting the underlying unity in the responses of Mediterranean elites and peoples to the forces of the dual revolution (the industrial and democratic revolutions of modern times). The deep cultural shifts of the period can be described as a kind of historical plate tectonics. I’ve already noted how monotheism, Hellenism, and the legacy of ancient empires (including especially Roman law) distinguish the region from the rest of Asia. By the late medieval period especially in Spain, France and Italy, we can observe the strengthening of an impulse toward enforced cultural homogeneity within the emerging states of the region—or at least the Christian ones. With the rise of the Iberian empires (Portugal, Castille, Aragon—earlier the Cathars and Albigensians), religious differences between groups became increasingly fraught. The search for religious homogeneity culminated in state projects of ethnic cleansing in Iberia of their Jewish and Muslim minorities. While the Ottoman record of religious tolerance in the period stands in sharp contrast to that of the Iberians, if we roll the cameras forward to the emergence of linguistic nationalisms in the Balkans and the Ottoman empire during the long nineteenth century, we note the reappearance of projects of ethnic cleansing in the service of enforcing cultural homogeneity. The history of linguistic minorities within the states of the region had more complex but equally fraught dynamics. We might evoke in this connection the contrasting histories of the Basque and Catalan speakers of Spain, or of Greek, Armenian, Kurdish and Arab speakers in Ottoman lands. I do not have the space to explore the urge for linguistic uniformity here. Suffice it to say, the persistence of submerged linguistic ethnicities remains an important element in the national politics of many Mediterranean countries. But exclusivist nationalisms are only one aspect of the

underlying similarities that linked the eastern and western regions of the Mediterranean, the worlds of the Catholic Iberians and the Muslim Ottomans.

Lineaments of Mediterranean Modernity in the Long Nineteenth Century

In this section, I want to focus upon the striking family resemblance of Mediterranean societies in the “group photo” of their encounter with modernity over the course of the long nineteenth century (1750-1914). Since I’m a Californian, seismic metaphors come naturally. Briefly, I want to argue that the responses of Mediterranean societies to the crustal shifts of the period can be described via a kind of historical plate tectonics. Let’s look again at the deep history of Mediterranean, this time viewed as a zone of tectonic interaction.

By 1750 all around the rim of the Inner Sea we find weak states with strong hinterlands (“explosive countrysides”).³³ An older historiography, perhaps impressed with the sheer scale of the Iberian Hapsburg and Ottoman empires, saw them as all powerful, world-bestridding colossi. Today’s historians are more apt to describe them as pitiful, muscle-bound giants.³⁴ A closer diagnostic reveals states chronically incapable of exercising their control beyond the walls of the provincial capitals, reduced to governing through a plethora of place-holders and middlemen who exercised a rough and ready justice (generally for a price). We next discover a dense thicket of hedge-priests and urban clerics intent upon making sure that liberal reform in all its myriad forms remained at bay, while they busily connived with landlords, military elites and urban gentlemen to guarantee this outcome. In the countryside the world tended to be divided between *macrofundia* and *microfundia* in which (as the century wore on) absentee landlords and their local henchmen faced down an increasingly numerous and obstreperous peasantry. This was much less true in Muslim parts of the Mediterranean, where relative indivision of land tended to be the norm until modern times. Here we find ourselves on the terrain of Hobsbawm’s *Primitive Rebels*, the Mezzogiorno, Sicily and Andalusia. But with a little imagination we can detect similar social forms all around the region, from Greece and Anatolia to Mount Lebanon and the Hawran, from Upper Egypt to the Maghreb.³⁵ (Nonetheless it is important not to draw this picture too sharply, as the Mediterranean countryside was, as Braudel has shown, infinitely various and complex).

The rise and fall of empires (the Ottoman and the Hapsburg, and all those that came before) durably affected the history of the modern Mediterranean. This heritage left durable historical residues: legal and administrative structures, urban types, characteristic approaches to difference (linguistic and religious), that distinguish historical trajectory of Mediterranean lands from those of Northwest Europe, East Asia, South Asia. On the question of difference, we might notice that the modern history of the region begins with the ethnic cleansing of Jews and Muslims from Iberia by Isabella la Catholica, and concludes in the 1920s with the ethnic cleansing of Armenians and Greeks from Anatolia by Ataturk. Bracketed by these dual ethnic cleansings, the search for an ethnically coherent nation is a defining feature of the ways in which the region

came to modernity. Here, we might say, the political plate and the cultural plate rammed up against one another.

The more historians have studied the Old Empires of the Mediterranean (the Hapsburg and the Ottoman), the more they appear to have been coalitions of interests, patchwork quilts of institutional structures, veritable museums of politics past whose strategy seemed to have to ensnare internal rivals in webs of privilege (or if that did not work, to expel them), while fostering sub-imperialisms (like that of the House of Aragon in Italy). By the eighteenth century the old structures were badly in need of an update, to which the Spanish Bourbon reforms and the various abortive reform projects of the Ottomans testify. But the path to reform was strewn with obstacles. Entrenched agrarian elites and their allies in church and state sought to oppose encroachments upon their traditional privileges. It was in this context that the Liberal Project (as I call the loosely connected bundle of political and economic reforms associated with the Enlightenment and the French Revolution) erupted upon the region.

Until now, despite the well-acknowledged deep structural historical unity of the Mediterranean, two important facts (and their attendant deeply interconnected historical narratives) have intervened to derail any effort to imagine the history of the modern Mediterranean as a whole. One is Islam. The second is colonialism. However, while colonialism has ended at least formally (independent states now exist around the rim of the Mediterranean, although local elites remain in the thrall of European and American masters), Islam has not. The result is that the colonial past continues to shape the ways in which we understand the modern histories of the eastern and southern Mediterranean (of Turkey, the Balkans and the Arab Mediterranean), placing them in parenthesis, apart from the history of the western and northern Mediterranean. This has made it difficult to perceive the underlying unities in the ways in which the Mediterranean came to modernity. Yet as we'll see in this section, there are important underlying structural similarities in the ways in which the societies of the Mediterranean came to modernity, as well as the characteristic conflicts to which this process gave rise. Increasingly semi-peripheral with respect to the world capitalist system, and characterized by weak state structures, delayed or muffled class formation, agrarian backwardness and the persistence of pastoralism, the coming to modernity of the Mediterranean foreshadows the historical experience of the Third World in its unity and diversity.³⁶

All national histories are by definition unique. But in comparison to one another, their underlying structures can bear a family resemblance. In this section I'd like to explore the architecture of political modernity in the Mediterranean. The Liberal reform project compelled Mediterranean elites to take positions on reform. For reform-minded elites, the state-led development project held out the possibility of defeating entrenched rivals, and a path to modernity. Their opponents viewed the reform package as a threat to age-old privileges and economic ways of life. Because the entire region and not just part of it experienced the age of liberal reform and economic modernization, there is an underlying similarity in the reforms and the opposition they engendered. At the risk of over-simplifying, the Mediterranean region was transformed over the

course of the long nineteenth century by the intersection of three main kinds of change: (1) the rise of the modern state; (2) the deepening of the incorporation of the region into the world economy; and (3) the unprecedented revolution in communications and transport. The struggle over the liberal reform package divided Mediterranean elites against one another, sparking both strong advocacy and passionate resistance. As the vectors of change ricocheted among different social groups, alliances shifted now one way, now another. Let's consider the larger context of reform, before moving on to a discussion of the ways in which social change produced social upheavals and contention around the region.

The primary engine of political change throughout the Mediterranean over the course of the long nineteenth century was the state. Inspired by the successes of the enlightenment French state, Spain, Italy and the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies sought to introduce liberal reforms in the eighteenth century. So too did the Ottoman Empire, albeit with minimal success until the advent of Mahmud II (1808-1839). To this end they drew upon the French political toolkit in an attempt to fashion political modernity. Central to the reform package was the disestablishment of the church's control over land. Reformers also sought to replace older military and governmental elites rooted in patron-clientage with newer ones for whom efficiency, discipline and *laissez-faire* were the key watchwords. Under the aegis of the Liberal state, bureaucracies sought to increase their control of the population, modern armies were established, and modern higher schools and modern methods of communications encouraged.

Let's look at each of these changes briefly. Spain, Italy, France and to a weaker degree Greece since 1830, the liberal state was the primary engine of change. The mechanisms of political change however operated in much the same fashion. At the level of the state we can summarize these changes as efforts by elites to introduce reform measures inspired by the French Enlightenment the purpose of which was to greatly expand the ability of the state to organize and control its citizens so as to govern more efficiently. Disestablishing the control over land of the church was central to this reform package. Under this church lands and *waqf* properties were legally taken over by the state. A second target of the Liberal reform project was the replacement older military and governmental elites rooted in patron-clientage with newer ones for whom efficiency, discipline and *laissez-faire* were the key watchwords. In this way, the Liberal state the bureaucracy sought to increase its control of the society, modern armies were established, and modern schools and methods of communications developed.

Although the aim of reform was to expand the ability of the state to organize and control its citizens and thereby to govern more efficiently, it is also important to recognize the relatively recent origin of the political boundaries of the region and the highly contested nature of the reform process. In 1800, the Hapsburg empire (in both its Spanish and Austrian incarnations) as well as the Ottoman empire remained heteroclitic and poorly integrated assemblages, and the boundaries of their domains were porous and subject to change without notice. The Kingdom of the Two Sicilies and the Egypt of Mehmet Ali enjoyed a contingent independence. The rise of the modern nation state with its homogenous narrative still lay in the future. Neither Greece nor Italy existed as

independent states. Nor indeed did the modern states of the Balkans (which emerged at the end of the century) and the Arab Middle East. To speak of the adoption of the reform project is therefore primarily to speak about the imperial auspices of reform, which from the point of view of the “captive nations” secreted within their frontiers would vastly disrupt their path towards independence.

As modern states emerged along the North bank, they developed new, more efficient and intrusive fiscal systems. These brought them into collision with old agrarian elites and established religious elites. Within this history, the Ottoman case (along with Egypt and Tunisia) differs primarily in degree. Its would-be state builders were no less jealous of their power and no less eager to demolish entrenched interests, and by the latter third of the nineteenth century they had some solid achievements. The Ottoman reform process (known as the *tanzimat*) provoked a collision between reform-minded state bureaucrats and local elites eager to defend their traditional rights and liberties. It also stimulated conflict with peasants and artisans, for whom the encroachment of the state was experienced primarily in the form of military conscription and increased taxation. Egypt and Tunisia had their own quasi-autonomous state building programs (though both were juridically part of the Ottoman empire, they possessed their capabilities of change). The reform impulse was weaker in pre-colonial Morocco, despite the accomplishments of Hasan I (1876-1894) and in Qajar Persia. Finally, we must recognize the colonial auspices under which reform was introduced especially in the Maghrib, starting with the 1830 French invasion of Algeria.

While little recognized, the cultural struggle set off within the region by the introduction of liberal reforms (whether in the Ottoman empire, in France, Spain and Italy or the Maghrib) pitted reformist officials against rural interests. Appointed from the metropolitan centers, reformists were politically unaccountable to local groups. Culturally distinct from the local populations, they spoke different languages and operated in terms of different cultural assumptions than those under their charge. Endowed with a sense of their own superiority to the locals by dint of their self-evident modernity, agents of reform suffered epic frustrations. Sharing orientalist stereotypes and racial prejudices about those whom they administered, they often resorted to force to carry out their objectives. In the process they provoked much resistance. Unable to speak the local language or comprehend the diffuse structures of local power other officials found themselves isolated and stopped trying, or retreated into their own privatistic worlds. The profound cultural abyss that separated reformist officials and progressive landlords in their respective “souths” from their local administrative charges can be observed in Carlo Levi’s *Christ Stopped at Eboli* and the novels of Marcel Pagnol and Yashar Kemal. But one finds a similar suspicion and hostility in the experiences of colonial officials in North Africa, Egypt and Palestine. Here the writings of Amin Maalouf, Abd al-Rahman al-Sharqawi and Mouloud Mammeri provide a useful guide.³⁷ There’s something deeply colonial that links the experiences of Mediterranean populations at the hands of the modern state.

The incorporation of the Mediterranean into the world economy stimulated a second and in some ways more far-reaching type of change that cumulatively affected even relatively isolated regions with weak states. However, its impact was differentially greater upon urban areas, like the Marseille area, northern Italy, Barcelona, Salonica, Istanbul and the littoral of the Arab East that stood astride major world communications links. Incorporation into the world economy encouraged the rise of new urban middle classes whose fortunes were linked to northern European elites. The incorporation also fostered the emergence of an urban-based class of landowners engaged in commercial agriculture for export, and provoked the decline of artisans and peasants unable to adapt to the changing economic tides. To the fiscal and other pressures of the centralizing state were added, therefore, additional ones based on incorporation in the capitalist world market. As with the enactment of state reforms, it is possible to detect the presence of semi-colonial patterns in the economic histories of the various "souths" of the European Mediterranean: Andalusia, parts of Languedoc, Corsica, the Mezzogiorno, Sicily. There is a semi-colonial element as well in the dominance of the various Mediterranean "Souths" by financial groups and institutions headquartered in the north, and in the transformation of the systems of landholding by liberal elites linked to northern Europe. But while the economic modernization of the Mediterranean region can be seen to have been structured by colonial relationships, at least in part, this is not the full story. It is precisely here that we can note the presence of "colonial" patterns in the economic trajectories histories of the various "souths" of the European Mediterranean: Andalusia, parts of Languedoc, Corsica, the Mezzogiorno, Sicily. The transformation of the systems of landholding and their dominance by liberal elites linked to El Norte is one element of this.

Recently, historians Jordi Nadal, Gérard Chastagnaret, Olivier Raveux and Luigi de Rosa have begun to challenge the standard history of how economic modernity came to the Mediterranean region. They have taken dead aim at the one-size fits all British model of textile-led industrial development, according to which the Mediterranean was seen as irrevocably backward since it did not conform. Instead, they have argued for the existence of a specifically Mediterranean path to economic development.³⁸ They note that already by the 1830s (and not the 1870s, as earlier historians have claimed), the metallurgy, food processing and vegetable oils industries in Barcelona, Marseilles, Naples were the centers of dynamism in the emerging modern economy of the Mediterranean.³⁹ Upon closer inspection it appears that even latifundist proprietors in Calabria in eighteenth century, long held out as hopelessly out of step with the new economic music, were more economically dynamic than previously believed.⁴⁰ Can one find sprouting seeds of capitalism in the Ottoman empire? A scan of the literature suggests that it too looks more modern and less out of it than previously held.⁴¹ The patterns of economic change were broadly similar in Ottoman domains, albeit with some important nuances. Lebanese silk entrepreneurs, sugar and cotton industrialists in Egypt, and Ottoman entrepreneurs (most of whom were Greek and Armenian) participated in the industrialization of their respective economies, in partnership (and often under the tutelage) of foreign (especially French) interests.⁴² By the last third of the nineteenth century, both in Ottoman lands as well as in France, Spain and Italy

(and perhaps Greece as well), these enterprises were “colonized” by “northern” capital. More or less at the same time, thanks to the steam navigation revolution and the opening of the Suez Canal (1869), they also were drawn into colonial circuits of exchange (West African ground nuts, for example).

Whether nineteenth century Egyptian, Lebanese and Ottoman entrepreneurs conformed to these patterns has not for the moment been examined. In general they appear to have participated in the industrialization of their respective economies, but generally in partnership (and often under the tutelage) of foreign (especially French) interests. Although the colonial pattern of development remains clear, we must recall as well that in other ways the worldview and aspirations of the liberal elites of pre-colonial Egypt, Tunisia and the Ottoman empire were broadly shared with the Euro-Mediterranean elite. Historian Albert Hourani’s *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age* (1964) is in many respects a group biography of this cosmopolitan ruling group. These individuals were often educated in Europe, spoke English and French among themselves, and often sat on the boards of directors of the same enterprises, such as the *Sucreries d’Egypte*.⁴³ Quintessential liberals, their nationalist vision readily accommodated European difference. The emergence of more deeply rooted cultural populist and radical nationalisms starting with Ataturk in Turkey in the inter-war period sounded the death knell for this class.

The nineteenth century communications revolution, our third vector of change, profoundly transformed Mediterranean lives as well. It constituted a third major vector of change. In contrast to the sixteenth century voyages of discovery, which rendered the Mediterranean increasingly peripheral to the new North Atlantic-centered world economy, the introduction of the railroad, the steamship (regular steamship service between the Middle East and Europe dates from the 1840s) and the telegraph (London was linked to India as early as 1857)—changed the place of the Mediterranean in the topology of global exchange one again. The formative vision for the modernization the place of the Mediterranean in the global circuit of exchanges was provided by French Saint-Simonian technocrats.⁴⁴ Most of the railroads around the region were constructed by French capital and with French engineering expertise.⁴⁵ Railroads helped bring Egyptian cotton to the world market, along with Lebanese silk, Palestinian soap and olive oil, and Sicilian and Andalusian grain. As a result of all these changes in communications, shipping times between Europe and markets in Asia were drastically reduced. Regular steamship transport linked the region to the Atlantic world, and facilitated large-scale migrations of people to North America, South America and Australasia. Finally, with the opening of the Suez Canal (1869), the onset of steamship navigation and the laying of the telegraph cables that linked Europe with the world, we arrive at the Mediterranean of modern times. Together with the inauguration of the American Transcontinental Railroad six months earlier, the opening of the Suez Canal made it possible to circle the globe in record time. These innovations restored the place of the Mediterranean in the topography of global exchange. To summarize, the nineteenth century communications revolution profoundly altered the spatial context of economic development of the region, securely linking it to the global market.

Lines of Social Cleavage

The onset of modernity in its diverse manifestations from 1750 provoked a series of bitter struggles along the southern cultural faultlines of Europe. Everywhere in the nineteenth century Mediterranean, the Liberal Project raised up certain groups in the society, and against others. Those possessing privileged ties to the state or to European business interests were often in a position to profit disproportionately, while urban artisans and rural agriculturalists found themselves squeezed from all sides. Following the establishment of European political control, groups willing to serve as intermediaries gained substantially, while overt opponents suffered from various forms of political and economic discrimination. The complex sequence of changes thus set in motion intersected with one another, generating powerful cross currents and back eddies which eroded old established interests and remolded new. Social protest and resistance found fertile ground in the circumstances thus created. Over the course of the long nineteenth century, elites, the church, workers and peasants found themselves divided along a number of lines of cleavage. Coalitions were continually reshaped even as they persisted. In the end, all people were affected, though not all to the same degree.

If we abstract from the dense thicket of local specificities that shaped these struggles and the cleavages they provoked and laid bare, it is nonetheless possible to observe some basic patterns.⁴⁶ In particular, the struggles center around three major arenas: struggles around the place of religion in the state, struggles around gender (especially sexuality and the public role of women) and the land question. It is crucial to understand that these struggles (and the cleavages they provoked and laid bare), beyond their complex local characteristics, derive from common sources.⁴⁷ Let's briefly examine each in turn.

The land question was the incontestable major source of conflict in the nineteenth century Mediterranean. It pitted a relatively small group of wealthy landlords holding vast tracts of land (macro-fundia) against throngs of smallholding peasants holding tiny uneconomic strips of land (micro-fundia) and an even larger array of day laborers and unemployed rural workers. The development of commercial agriculture (whether under the auspices of colonialism, as in the Maghreb, or under local landlords (as in the European Mediterranean, eastern Anatolia, Egypt, and greater Syria) provoked continual resistance. Throughout the nineteenth century the Mediterranean region as a whole was plagued by peasant violence. These took a variety of forms, as memorably evoked for Italy and Spain in Eric Hobsbawm's *Primitive Rebels*: millenarianism, social banditry, and somewhat later (more worryingly for landlords) peasant leagues like the Sicilian *fascii*, Andalusian anarchists, and leftist labor organizers.⁴⁸ The dynamics depended upon local contexts, but peasant violence was an endemic feature of the history of Andalusia, Sicily, Greece, Lebanon, and Kabylia (among other regions).

As modernity came to the region in the nineteenth century, the place of religion (previously a central element of ethnic identity everywhere) became a

second focal point of struggle. Starting with the sixteenth century wars of religion and the introduction of secularizing measures, religious identity continued to underpin the emerging political order and religion as a marker of identity was if anything strengthened by the dynamics of change.⁴⁹ But it was not only Latin Europe that was ravaged by the struggle between clerical and anti-clerical interests in the nineteenth century. Here we may distinguish between three main historical experiences: a Latin Mediterranean (France, Italy and the Iberian states), an Orthodox Mediterranean (mostly the Balkans and parts of Anatolia) and a Muslim Mediterranean (the Ottoman domains, including Anatolia and the Arab East and Arab West). Distinctive historical legacies, including religious institutions, legal systems and conceptions of the state and the individual differentiated these three groups. Although not usually recognized, the same cultural confrontation also forms a leitmotif in the deep structural history of modern Turkey.

Across the region the Liberal project stigmatized religion as backward, and marked it for elimination. At opposite ends of the Mediterranean popular anticlerical passions spilled over in attacks against Spanish convents and Turkish sufi lodges. The bureaucrats of the *tanzimat*, no less than the liberal bureaucrats of nineteenth century Spain, France and Italy saw in priest-craft the enemy of all reform. And thus they gave it no quarter.⁵⁰ Thus religious elites, whether Muslim, Christian or Orthodox sought to block efforts to abolish old privileges, or to undermine old classes (including old military elites old landowning elites, and old religious classes. In some respects we can think of them as the cultural equivalent of tectonic plates, now colliding, now slipping alongside one another over a very long historical perspective. However, despite what may appear to be their enormous power, in fact the civilizational blocks were riven by the religious complexities and local syncretisms that were a central organizing feature of the Mediterranean social order. Against the expectations of the progressive narrative, linguistic nationalisms failed to supplant religious identity. The extreme secularism of Spanish anarchists finds its homologue in the Ataturkian bully-boys of Turkey. Like the return of the repressed, Islamist groups now terrify the holders of power all around the rim of the Muslim Mediterranean in the name of populist virtue and justice. As I have suggested elsewhere, the torments of contemporary Algeria must be seen in the context of a Jacobin French colonial state that all too efficiently demolished the central institutions of Algerian Islam.⁵¹

A final arena of struggle in the region during the long nineteenth century focused upon loosening patriarchal control of female sexuality and permitting women to participate in the public square. It had two main foci. One focus was the struggle over the legal status of women in Mediterranean societies, where deeply rooted local customs and religious laws restricted progress. In Catholic Europe, where French code law gave women some limited rights, the struggle was long and messy but ultimately successful. In Orthodox Europe, it was delayed until after World War II, though those countries where there was some code law tended to be more advanced. In the Muslim Mediterranean, this meant the efforts to modernize the *shari'a* through the enactment of a new family code regulating marriage, the family, divorce and inheritance. A second arena of

confrontation was over women's suffrage. Spain was the first Mediterranean state to afford women the right to vote in national elections in 1931. Turkey followed in 1934, followed by France and Yugoslavia in 1945, Italy in 1948 and Greece in 1952. With the end of colonialism, the rest of the Arab Mediterranean soon followed.

The Impact of Migration on the Mediterranean Region

The communications revolution had other effects within the Mediterranean region. It greatly facilitated the movement of people as well as goods--a process that shows no signs of abating any time soon. This forms the subject of the final section of this paper. Four broad types of migration can be distinguished. In the first category are the migrations out of the Euro-Mediterranean region that was primarily directed to the Americas and Australasia. Thus five million Spaniards emigrated to the Americas in the period from the 1820s to the 1930s, where they were joined by more than ten million Italians. Lesser numbers of Greeks, Armenians, Lebanese and Syrians left the Ottoman empire in the nineteenth century bound. All told, close to twelve million Mediterranean men and women emigrated over a period of a century and a quarter, with the majority of departures coming after 1870. A second type of migration involved the movements of Mediterranean people within the Euro-Mediterranean arena. While the numbers of people involved were substantially lower than the long distance travelers, they were nonetheless significant. Already by the 1830s, hundreds of thousands of Italian migrant workers were seeking economic opportunities in French (and later in the nineteenth century, German) cities. Prior to World War I thousands of Spanish and Portuguese as well as Algerian Kabyles had already found the way to French industrial job sites. These migrants were to be the forerunners of the waves of Iberians, Maghrebis and others who world come after World War II. Because these movements are relatively well known they need no further comment here.

Less well known are the large-scale movements of the Turkish-speaking populations of the Black sea region and the Caucuses who flooded into Anatolia and the Balkans from the end of the eighteenth century. Eventually the Russian advance into this region was to propel more than seven million Muslims to seek refuge in Ottoman Turkey between 1783 and 1913. Of these refugees 3.8 million were Russian subjects, most of them Turkish-speaking Muslims (including some two million people from the Caucuses). With the emergence of nation states in the Balkans, more Muslim and Turkish populations were displaced. Large numbers of Greek and other Christian groups went in the opposite direction. Not until the exchange of populations in the 1920s between Greece and Turkey did these movements of peoples come to an end. The large-scale ethnic killings of Armenians, especially those during World War I when between 700,000 and 1.2 million perished at the hands of the Turks permanently altered the demography of modern Turkey. As a result of these massacres and movements of peoples, the Balkans and Turkey became more homogeneous (the former more Christian, the latter more Muslim), the cultural faultlines more pronounced.

Still less well known are the pre-colonial movements of southern Italians, Sicilians, Corsicans and Maltese to North Africa (especially Tunisia) that Julia Clancy-Smith has studied. She estimates that thousands of individuals, most were misfits of one kind or another -- draft dodgers, criminals, speculators, fortune hunters, lovers on the lam. When the French protectorate was established in 1881, the Beylik of Tunisia was home to some 70,000 Sicilio-Italians and 12,000 Maltese. It is well to recall that until the unification of Italy and the consolidation of European states, there was nothing odd about this. Here Clancy-Smith lifts the rug to enable us to see the hybrid cultures of the not yet quite modern Mediterranean.⁵²

Khedival Egypt attracted similarly impressive numbers of Levantines (as they were called at the time), though in this case the polyglot and heterogeneous population of Europeans and not-quite-Europeans incorporated earlier sedimentary layers of Italians and Greeks who were attracted to Egypt by the spice trade, if not the crusades. The nineteenth century European migrants were attracted by the prospect of riches attendant upon the construction of the Suez Canal (1867) as well as a refuge from hardship. (Not for nothing was this period in modern Egyptian history known to Europeans as “Klondike on the Nile,” such were the visions that attracted a veritable plague of speculators and con-men.)⁵³ The descendants of these individuals populate the pages of Lawrence Durrell’s *Alexandria Quartet*.

Finally, there are the large numbers of European settlers who migrated to North Africa and Palestine. On the eve of the independence movements of the 1950s and 1960s, North Africa counted a European population of 1.5 million settlers (chiefly French, Italian and Spanish) who arrived over the course of the nineteenth century in colonial (Zionist settlers in Palestine in the first half of the twentieth century should also be included in this group). Nowhere was the settler colonial population greater than in Algeria, which on the eve of the revolution totaled some 1.2 million. It is a well-known secret that the “French” population of Algeria comprised a majority of people whose ancestors had arrived from Spain, Italy, and Malta – and not the hexagon itself. David Prochaska has evoked the Algero-French patois of the settler populations, and their sense of themselves as a new “Mediterranean” race in his book, *Making Algeria French*.⁵⁴ The European population of Morocco, Tunisia and Libya (the other Maghrebi societies) totaled around 350,000 individuals.

With de-colonization, more than 1.5 million settlers of European origin (most of them middle class) relocated to southern France, Italy and Spain, and the Americas. This constitutes the third major wave of migration that has reshaped the Mediterranean. The reintegration of former settler populations into contemporary European societies has posed an enormous challenge. This is especially true of southern France, where ex-Algerian settlers form one of the major constituencies behind Le Pen. By an irony of history southern France is also heavily populated by large populations of recently arrived North African Muslims, as well as Spaniards, Portuguese and Italians all attracted by the prospect of a better life. Studies of labor migration from the Mediterranean to

northern Europe and the wider world reveal the complexity, as well as the deep historical roots of this phenomenon.

The post-World War II period has seen the large scale migration of Spaniards and Portuguese to France, of Turks to Germany, of southern Italians to northern Italy and Germany, and of Maghrebis to western Europe. With the onset of globalization, a far more massive and heterogeneous wave of migration has brought larger numbers of people from the Arab East, Turkey, East Europe and the interior of Africa to Western Europe. The size of this cohort as well as its diversity has demographically transformed Western European society. It has also posed a powerful challenge to European nationalisms predicated upon the myth of heterogeneity.

How are we to understand the impact of the large-scale migration within and from the Mediterranean region? I have two thoughts. Both refer us, though in different ways, to the social context of migration. As we have seen, the nineteenth century Mediterranean region as a whole was plagued by peasant violence in response to the development of commercial agriculture. In this historical context, migration served to defuse the agrarian time bomb, in which impacted peasantries struggled against grasping landlords (*latifundistas*, colonial settlers) and the inexorable pressures of rapid demographic increase. A second thought proceeds from the observation that Mediterranean migration patterns are also complexly inter-woven into social fabric of peasant society. Throughout the Mediterranean, worker remittances made possible the reinvention of the neo-traditional family and the renegotiation of gender norms. As numerous scholars have argued the traditional Mediterranean family, is in fact the result of dynamic processes closely connected to family strategies of investment in land and the maintenance of control of women and minors, by migrant men. Akram Khater's book, *Inventing Home*, explores the way in which this happened for Lebanon. He examines the gendered impact on Maronite Lebanese peasant society of the silk boom (and bust) and links it to a careful study of the ways Lebanese emigration impacted the household economy.⁵⁵ Khater argues that the ways in which Lebanese rural women responded to the tensions generated by the massive changes of the period lies at the core of new understandings of how modern Lebanon was made. Gender and the family, he argues, were the sites of contention over a changing Lebanese cultural identity. Both were intimately linked to histories of migration.

Conclusion: Towards A History of the Modern Mediterranean

This paper is part of an effort to reexamine against the background of world history how the Mediterranean came to modernity. It is intended to stimulate further thought, not foreclose debate. Modernity, I suggest, was the product global processes of interaction of the societies of Eurasia, rather than the result of the genius of any particular society. Against the grain of interpretations of the European past that view it as the beneficiary of a fore-ordained destiny, and impute moral superiority to the fact that the modern world was first fully instantiated in Europe, I suggest an alternate reading. It begins with the notion

that there is something seriously flawed about models of causality that view the societies change in accord with in-built civilizational motors. While “the rise of the west” makes great ideology, it is poor history. Like Jared Diamond, I believe that we need to situate the fate of nations in a long-term eco-historical context. Unlike Diamond, I believe that the ways (and the sequences) in which things happened often shaped what came next. The Mediterranean is a particularly useful case in this light. An ancient center of economic and cultural dynamism, its history provides part of the authorizing documentation that undergirds the European miracle literature, according to which once the bouncing ball of historical change had jumped to northwestern Europe, the Mediterranean dropped out of the narrative. The secular decline and de-industrialization of the Mediterranean prefigures the fate of the Third World. No longer a center of progress after the sixteenth century, the decline of the Mediterranean is usually ascribed to its inherent cultural deficiencies. While the specific cultural infirmity varies with the historian (amoral familism, patron/clientalism and religion are favorites) its civilizationalist presuppositions are clear. In this respect the search for “what went wrong” typifies national histories across the region.

In this paper I have argued that we can observe numerous points of convergence within the Mediterranean region. For example, I have suggested strong resemblances in the transformation of the Mediterranean countryside (and responses to this process), as well as in the enormous growth of cities (and responses to it) and the characteristic divisions among the elite over the utility or not of adopting the Liberal Reform package. Broadly similar as well were the new lifestyles, a trend especially marked of course among the elites, some of whom indeed frequented the same spas, casinos and opera seasons, and (occasionally) sat on the same boards of directors and were members of Masonic lodges. However, once one discounts for the intense specificity of local customs, similar broad trends can be observed among workers and peasants. New political identities circulated throughout the Mediterranean, including nationalism (mostly avowedly secular) but also overwhelmingly for the emerging middle classes and above, consumerism. New ideologies too were beginning to appear, including populism, anarchism, socialism and the beginnings of what would become in the interwar period fascism. Is the Mediterranean fated to be a zone of cultural and civilizational conflict? If we consider the deeply rooted drive for cultural homogeneity that lurks within even French universalism, it is difficult to give a positive answer to this question. However, as I have suggested here, other histories exist, other ways of thinking about the region and its confrontation with modernity. It is important to encourage the development of these alternative histories if we do not wish to relive the dilemmas of civilizational history.

Endnotes

¹ Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (Paris: PUF, 1947 and subsequent editions)

² Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: a Study of Mediterranean History* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000). See also the same authors' "The Mediterranean and the New Thalassology," *American Historical Review* 113:3 (2006).

³ Here Ottoman historians have taken the lead. See for example among others, Molly Greene, *Catholic Pirates and Greek Merchants* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

⁴ Marie-Noelle Bourguet, Daniel Nordman, Vassilis Panayotopoulos, Maroula Sinarellis (eds.) *L'Invention scientifique de la Méditerranée: Egypte, Morée, Algérie* (Paris: Ecoles des hautes études en sciences sociales, 1998). See also Marie-Noelle Bourguet, Daniel Nordman, Vassilis Panayotopoulos, Maroula Sinarellis (eds.) *Enquêtes en Méditerranée: Les expéditions françaises d'Égypte, de Morée et d'Algérie Actes du colloque Athènes-Nauplie 8-10 Juin 1995* (Athens: Institut de recherches néohelleniques, 1999) and B. Panagiotopolous (ed.) *Les expéditions françaises en Méditerranée* (Athens: Centre de recherches néohelleniques, n.d.)

⁵ On Chevalier, see the forthcoming work of Michael P. Murphy, *Envisioning Romantic Political Economy: The Formative Years of Michel Chevalier (1806-1879)* Ph.D. dissertation. University of California, Santa Cruz, June 2011.

⁶ Jane Schneider, *Italy's "Southern Question": Orientalism in One Country* (Oxford, New York: Berg, 1998).

⁷ Edmund Burke III and David Prochaska, eds., *After the Colonial Turn: Orientalism, History and Theory* (Lincoln: Nebraska, forthcoming 2007).

⁸ Edward C. Banfield, *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society* (Glencoe, Ill., Free Press, 1958); Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong?: the Clash Between Islam and Modernity in the Middle East* (New York: Perennial, 2003).

⁹ Ross E. Dunn, "Indo-Mediterranea: Thinking about the Geography of World History," Planetary Perspectives Series, Rutgers Center for Historical Analysis, Rutgers University, Nov. 2005.

¹⁰ Jose Moya, personal communication. May 7, 2005.

¹¹ Fernand Braudel, *Civilization & Capitalism 15th-18th Century* 3 vols (New York: Harper & Row, 1985) v. 1, *The Structures of Everyday Life*.

¹² See Kenneth R. Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000). More generally, Andre Gunder Frank, *Reorient: Global Economy in the Asian Age* (Berkeley: California, 1998) and Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

¹³ The analysis that follows draws upon my "The Transformation of the Middle Eastern Environment, 1500 B.C.E. – 2000 C.E." in E. Burke and K. Pomeranz eds., *The Environment and World History, 1500-200* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 81-117.

¹⁴ Peter Christensen, *The Decline of Iranshahr: Irrigation and Environments in the History of the Middle East, 500 B.C. to A.D. 1500* (Copenhagen: Museum

Tusculanum Press, 1993).

¹⁵ See Table 1. Based upon Colin McEvedy and Richard Jones, *Atlas of World Population History* (Harmondsworth and New York: Penguin Books, 1978) and Carlo Cipolla (ed.) *The Fontana History of Europe*, vol. 2 *The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* and vol. 3, *The Industrial Revolution*. (London: Fontana/Collins, 1973 and 1974). For purposes of this table, I have added the population figures from McEvedy and Jones for the Middle East, North Africa with the figures from Cipolla (ed.) for Spain, Portugal and Italy. I have then subtracted the Spain, Portugal and Italy figures from those given for "Europe" in McEvedy and Jones. A finer-tuned statistical definition of the Mediterranean awaits! In the meantime, this rough cut will have to do.

¹⁶ Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* 2 vols. (New York: Harper's, 1978. 1995), I, Ch. 4.

¹⁷ Oliver Rackham and A.T. Grove, *The Nature of the Mediterranean Europe: An Ecological History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

¹⁸ Brian Fagan, *The Little Ice Age: How Climate Made History, 1300-1850* (New York: Perseus, 2000).

¹⁹ Edmund Burke, III and Kenneth L. Pomeranz (eds.) *The Environment and World History 1500-2000* (Under submission, 2006). Also John R. Richards, *The Endless Frontier: An Environmental History of the Early Modern World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003). On Spain in this period, see David Ringrose, *Transportation and Economic Stagnation in Spain* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990).

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²⁴ Niels Steensgaard, *The Asian Trade Revolution of the Seventeenth Century: The East India Companies and the Decline of the Caravan Trade* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1974).

²⁵ Dennis Flynn and Arturo Giraldez, "Born With A Silver Spoon," *Journal of World History* (1998). Also Andre Gunder Frank, *Reorient: Global Economy in the Asian Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

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²⁷ The concept of energy regime is developed by Johan Goudsblom, *Fire and Civilization* (London: Allen Lane, 1992) and Fred Spier, *The Structure of Big History* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996). Also David Christian, *Maps of*

Time: An Introduction to Big History (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

²⁸ The rest of this paragraph draws upon my "The Big Story: Human History, Energy Regimes, and the Environment," E. Burke III and K. Pomeranz eds., *The Environment and World History 1500 BCE to 2000 CE* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 33-53.

²⁹ For some examples: Edward Banfield, *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society* (New York: Free Press, 1958); Julian Pitt-Rivers, *Mediterranean Countrymen* (Paris, Mouton, 1963); Raphael Patai, *The Arab Mind* (New York: Scribner, 1976).

³⁰ Eric M. Jones, *The European Miracle: Environments, Economies and Geopolitics in the History of Europe and Asia*. Third ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2003).

³¹ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations: Remaking of World Order* (New York: Touchstone Books, 1997).

³² Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong? the Clash Between Islam and Modernity in the Middle East* (New York : Oxford University Press, 2002).

³³ See my "Changing Patterns of Peasant Protest in the Middle East, 1750-1950," in John Waterbury and Farhad Kazemi (eds.) *Peasant Politics and Violence in the Recent History of The Middle East* (Gainesville: University of Florida Presses, 1991), 24-37.

³⁴ The literature is vast. On the Spanish empire, see Leslie Bethell (ed.) *Colonial Spanish America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, date); J. H. Elliott, *Imperial Spain, 1469-1716* (London: St. Martins, 1968); John Lynch, *Spain 1516-1598* (Oxford: Blackwells, 1992). On the Ottoman empire: Halil Inalcik with Donald Quataert, eds., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Suraiya Faroqhi, et al., *The Cambridge History of Turkey. Vol. 3, The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603-1839* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

³⁵ E.J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels* (New York: Harper & Row, 1958) and many subsequent editions.

³⁶ On the persistence of pastoralism, see my "Pastoralism and the Mediterranean Environment," 42(4) *IJMES* (2010): 663-665.

³⁷ Compare Carlo Levi, *Christ Stopped at Eboli* (New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 1947) and subsequent editions; Amin Maalouf, *Origines* (Paris: Grasset, 2004); Adel Rahman Al-Sharqawi, *Egyptian Earth* (London: Saqi Books, 2005); and *The Sleep of the Just* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958).

³⁸ The British model, best summarized in Walt W. Rostow's *Stages of Economic Growth* stressed the lead role industrialization of textile production. In the 1980s, Patrick O'Brien and Caglar Keyder argued for the existence of a French road to capitalist development (based upon the northern French experience). See their *Economic growth in Britain and France, 1780-1914 : two paths to the twentieth century* (London ; Boston : G. Allen & Unwin, 1978).

³⁹ For an overview, see Gérard Chastagnaret et Olivier Raveux, "Espace et stratégies industrielles aux XVIIIe et XIXe siècles: exploiter le laboratoire méditerranéen," *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine*, nos. 2-3, (2001), 11-24. More generally, Olivier Raveux, Gérard Chastagnaret et Paul Aubert *Construire des mondes. Elites et espaces en Méditerranée, XVIe-XXe siècle* (Aix-en-Provence, Publications de l'Université de Provence, 2005). See also Jordi Nadal, *Moler, Tejer*

y *fundir*. *Estudios de historia industrial*, (Barcelona: Ariel, 1992); Gérard Chastagnaret, ed., *Crise espagnole et nouveau siècle en Méditerranée. Politiques publiques et mutations structurelles des économies dans l'Europe méditerranéenne, fin XIXe-début XXe siècles* (Madrid, Casa de Velázquez, 1998); and Luigi de Rosa, *La rivoluzione industriale in Italia* (Rome: Laterza, 1985).

⁴⁰ Marta Petrusiewicz, *Latifundium: Moral Economy and Material Life in a European Periphery* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996).

⁴¹ See for example, E.R.J. Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy, 1800-1914* (London: Methuen, 1981 and Charles Issawi, *An Economic History of the Middle East and North Africa* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

⁴² Suraiya Faroqhi, et al., *The Cambridge History of Turkey. Vol. 3, The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603-1839* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Akram F. Khater, *Inventing Home: Emigration, Gender, and the Middle Class in Lebanon, 1870-1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Ellis Goldberg, *Tinker, Tailor, and Textile Worker: Class and Politics in Egypt, 1930-1952* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986) and Robert Vitalis, *When Capitalists Collide: Business Conflict and the End of Empire in Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

⁴³ Ellis Goldberg, *Tinker, Tailor and Textile Worker: Class and Politics in Egypt 1930-1954* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

⁴⁴ "French Engineers and the Transformation of the Middle Eastern Environment in the Long Nineteenth Century," in Diana Davis and Edmund Burke III, ed. *Environmental Imaginaries of the Middle East: History, Policy and Practice* (Athens: Ohio University Press, under submission).

⁴⁵ "French Engineers and the Transformation of the Middle Eastern Environment in the Long Nineteenth Century," in Diana Davis and Edmund Burke III, ed. *Environmental Imaginaries of the Middle East: History, Policy and Practice* (Athens: Ohio University Press, under submission).

⁴⁶ Edmund Burke III, "Changing Patterns of Peasant Protest in the Middle East, 1750-1950," in John Waterbury and Farhad Kazemi (eds.), *Peasant Politics and Violence in the Recent History of the Middle East* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Presses, forthcoming, 1991), 24-37.

⁴⁷ Edmund Burke III, "Changing Patterns of Peasant Protest in the Middle East, 1750-1950," in John Waterbury and Farhad Kazemi (eds.), *Peasant Politics and Violence in the Recent History of the Middle East* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Presses, forthcoming, 1991), 24-37.

⁴⁸ Anton Blok, *The Mafia of a Sicilian Village: 1860-1960: A Study of Violent Peasant Entrepreneurs* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1974), Roderick Aya, *The Missed Revolution: the Fate of Rural Rebels in Sicily and Southern Spain, 1840-1950* (Amsterdam: Universiteit van Amsterdam, Antropologisch-Sociologisch Centrum, 1975); Temma Kaplan, *Anarchists of Andalusia, 1868-1903* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).

⁴⁹ See C. A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), Chapter 9.

⁵⁰ Niyazi Berkes, *The Rise of Secularism in Turkey* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1964).

⁵¹ Edmund Burke III, "The Terror and Religion: Brittany and Algeria," In Gregory Blue, Martin Bunton and Ralph Croizier (eds.) *Colonialism and the Modern World* (White Plains NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2002), 40-50.

⁵² See her *Mediterraneans: North Africa and Europe in the Age of Migration, c. 1800-1900*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).

⁵³ David Landes, *Bankers and Pashas; International Finance and Economic Imperialism in Egypt* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1958).

⁵⁴ David Prochaska, *Making Algeria French: Bone 1870-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) and the same author's "History as Literature, Literature as History: Cagayous of Algiers," *American Historical Review* 101 (1996): 670-711.

⁵⁵ Akram Khater, *Inventing Home, Emigration, Gender, and the Middle Class in Lebanon, 1870-1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001)