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The Italian Renaissance in the Mediterranean or Between East and West?
A Review Article

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The idea of the essential unity of the Mediterranean Sea can be traced to antiquity, as can the recognition of the central nature of the Italian peninsula in that sea. Writing in 77 C.E., at a moment when the Roman Empire ensured the political as well as the environmental unity of the Mediterranean, Pliny the Elder described Italy as "a land which is at once the foster-child and parent of all other lands, chosen by divine providence to make heaven itself more renowned, to unite scattered empires, to tame savage customs, to draw the discordant and barbarous tongues of numerous peoples together into the conversation of a single language, to give mankind civilization, in short to become the single fatherland of all the races of the earth."[1] A Roman writing as his city's imperial expansion seemed unstoppable, Pliny was confident in the dignity and grandeur of the Roman project to subsume the diverse societies of the ancient Mediterranean under a single political, linguistic, and legal order.

With the benefit of hindsight, Pliny's cultural chauvinism looks like hubris. The slow but inexorable crumbling of the Roman Empire ended the political unity of the Mediterranean permanently, and the successive centuries introduced a number of new contenders for Mediterranean hegemony. Invaders from the north, south, and east — Visigoths, Vandals, Arabs, Bulgars, Turks — brought their own languages and cultural patterns to the region. Significantly, the Arabs brought a new religion, Islam, which shaped the region's religious culture, together with the varieties of Christianity that had taken hold in the waning days of the Roman Empire. In successive centuries, religiously motivated warfare between Christians and Muslims intertwined with political battles among Byzantines, Ummayads, and Ottomans, all of who claimed the Roman imperial legacy.

There is an ongoing scholarly debate over what this historical legacy meant for the medieval and early modern Mediterranean. The Belgian historian Henri Pirenne famously stated that "without Mohammed there would have been no Charlemagne."[2] He saw the arrival of Islam on Mediterranean shores as a rupture of Roman commercial and cultural unity and argued that Latin Christian Europe turned northwards in the eighth century, developing its own economic, political, and religious trajectories. While the details of the so-called Pirenne thesis have been successfully challenged by later generations of scholars, the core of his vision of a Mediterranean space divided by religions in conflict has endured, now articulated in terms of a "Clash of Civilizations".[3] The French historian Fernand Braudel, in his monumental work *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (1st ed. 1949, 2nd ed. 1966, 1st Eng. trans. 1973) proposed an equally influential alternate interpretation that emphasized co-existence over conflict, depicting a unified Mediterranean environment that resulted in societies sharing a "common destiny." In the decades after its publication, Braudel's *Mediterranean* was followed by only a limited number of studies looking at the entire region in the medieval and

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[1] *Natural History,* 3.5.39, cited in Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 27.

[2] Henri Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, trans. Bernard Miall (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1939).

[3] The work of the political scientist Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996) exemplifies this view.

early modern eras. Most notably, S.D. Goitein's *A Mediterranean Society* used the documents of the Cairo Geniza to reconstruct a rich and complex network of Jewish merchants from the Indian Ocean to the Black Sea.[4]

More recently, a growing interest in the dynamics of multi-cultural societies and in historical relationships between a Muslim "East" and a Christian "West" has driven a sort of renaissance in the field of Mediterranean Studies. The vision of the Mediterranean articulated by an ever-increasing number of books and articles is one of fragmentation within unity, a construct that allows for an almost infinite amount of regional diversity and complexity within a framework of shared environmental opportunity and constraint. Scholars of the Mediterranean now focus on borders, on networks of exchange, and on the way that the interplay of conflict and co-existence allowed for individual and collective negotiations of identity. One of the most welcome developments in recent historiography is the greater integration of the Islamic Mediterranean into scholars' considerations of the region. Braudel remained convinced that the "Turkish Mediterranean lived and breathed with the same rhythms as the Christian," but for him the precise contours of this shared experience remained secretive, locked in then-inaccessible Ottoman archives.[5] Thanks to two generations of high quality Anglophone scholarship on the Ottoman Empire and the medieval Muslim world, that is no longer the case, making a more balanced and nuanced view of the sea possible.

One of the unifying themes in the scholarship on the medieval and early modern Mediterranean over the last decade has been the Christian European engagement with the Muslim world. A number of studies examine Europeans' rhetorical, ideological, and artistic constructions and representation of individual Muslims, Mamluks, and Ottomans. Many, if not most, of these depictions of Muslim "Others" were negative and unflattering; the question then becomes, unflattering to whom? The emerging consensus from scholars who study these representations is that while these visual and rhetorical images tell us very little about the inhabitants of the southern and eastern reaches of the Mediterranean, they tell us a great deal about Europeans' ideas about themselves. Europe's extended interaction with religious, ethnic, and cultural difference is thus essential for understanding the development and self-definition of a recognizably European, Western Christian identity.

A second set of recent works engages with the distinctive forms of culture produced in Mediterranean societies. The environment of the Mediterranean has led to an unusually high degree of communication and interaction between the societies around the sea. While past scholarship measured this interaction in primarily economic and commercial terms, more recent studies have begun to investigate the effects of this interaction on the level of mentalities. How, precisely, was the material culture, narrative forms, and religious expression shaped by centuries of co-existence and interaction in the Mediterranean? The model for investigating this set of questions has been the Iberian peninsula, where scholars have identified levels of religious and

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[4] S.D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza*, 6 vols (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967-1983); for assessments of Goiten's contribution to the field, see Horden and Purcell, *Corrupting Sea*, 34-35 and Steven M. Wasserstrom, "Apology for S.D. Goitein," in *A Faithful Sea: The Religious Cultures of the Mediterranean, 1200-1700*, ed. Adnan Husain and K.E. Fleming, 173-98 (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2007).

[5] The phrase is from Braudel's preface to the first English translation of *The Mediterranean*, 14. For an introduction to Ottoman historiography of the twentieth century, see Leslie Peirce, "Changing Perceptions of the Ottoman Empire: the Early Centuries," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 19:1 (2004): 6-28.

cultural conflict as well as *convivencia*, or co-existence, in the medieval period.[6] In the early modern period, Hapsburg Spain and its battles with the Ottoman Empire often serve as the premier example of growing religious and political conflict between expanding world empires.[7] An Italian vantage point on the Mediterranean past offers an important point of comparison with Iberian examples; while Italians also had a long and intense experience of interaction and exchange across religious boundaries, Italian territory (with the exception of Sicily) was not conquered or directly ruled by Muslims, placing cross-cultural encounters on a very different footing.

A number of recent works with an Italian focus engage with the major themes of Mediterranean encounter: merchant culture and commercial exchange, crusade, pilgrimage, and shared sacred geographies. This tendency is particularly prominent in the "high culture" fields — art and architectural history, literary history, the intellectual culture of humanism, political and diplomatic endeavors — that have traditionally been framed in the context of the Italian Renaissance. The aim of this essay is to consider the direction in which scholars of the medieval and early modern Mediterranean have been moving and to assess how individual monographs and essays relate to the field as a whole. The works under review here are limited, perhaps arbitrarily, to those published within the last decade and to those that engage, either geographically or conceptually, with the Italian peninsula.[8] Taken as a whole, these works suggest some possible responses to the question of where a focus on the connections, interactions, and cross-cultural exchange leaves the Italian peninsula — and by extension Italian Studies — in the Mediterranean world. The idea emerging from the integration of the high culture of the Italian Renaissance into a larger history of cultural exchange is that the Renaissance owed a great deal to the exchanges between East and West. Furthermore, the impact of this exchange cannot simply be measured by finding the products and ideas that the West took from the East, or vice versa, but is found in the deliberate and creative assimilation of diverse traditions that led to the cultural dynamism of late medieval and early modern Italy.

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[6] For an introduction to the extensive literature on conflict and co-existence in medieval and early modern Spain, see Chris Lowney, *A Vanished World: Medieval Spain's Golden Age of Enlightenment* (New York: Free Press, 2005); *Convivencia: Jews, Muslims, and Christians in medieval Spain*, ed. Vivian B. Mann, Thomas F. Glick, and Jerrilynn D. Dodds (New York: G. Braziller and the Jewish Museum, 1992); Jerrilynn D. Dodds, María Rosa Menocal and Abigail Krasner Balbale, *The Arts of Intimacy: Christians, Jews, and Muslims in the Making of Castilian Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); *In the Light of Medieval Spain: Islam, the West, and the Relevance of the Past*, ed. Simon R. Doubleday and David Coleman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

[7] The third part of Braudel's *Mediterranean*, "Events, Politics and People," narrates Philip II's diplomatic and military engagements with the Ottomans; see also Andrew Hess, *The Forgotten Frontier: A History of the Sixteenth Century Ibero-African Frontier* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978). More recently, a set of works on the battle of Lepanto have reiterated the "clash of civilizations" view of the relationship between Christians and Muslims: see Hugh Bicheno, *Crescent and Cross: The Battle of Lepanto 1571* (London: Cassell, 2003); Niccolò Capponi, *Victory of the West: The Great Christian-Muslim Clash at the Battle of Lepanto* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2007); Roger Crowley, *Empires of the Sea: The Siege of Malta, the Battle of Lepanto, and the Contest for the Center of the World* (New York: Random House, 2008).

[8] The collaborative nature of work in a field scattered over academic disciplines and geographic/ linguistic specializations means that a number of the most important insights come from edited collections of essays rather than specialized monographs; for reasons of space, I have not attempted to provide a full synopsis of each contribution to every collection, but have highlighted only the most relevant contributions here.

A theory of the Mediterranean as a discrete object of historical study necessitates defining what is not Mediterranean, or where the limits of a distinctively Mediterranean culture lie. The limits of Braudel's Mediterranean were defined by the cultivation of the olive and the grape, but where are the boundaries of a region defined by connectivity and dense networks of interaction? How can scholars distinguish between the global phenomenon of cross-cultural exchange and the specific types of interactions that occur in a Mediterranean space?

The essays collected in *Early Modern History and the Social Sciences*, edited by John Marino, make a serious and sustained effort to grapple with these issues.[9] While the volume originated at a 1997 conference organized to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the publication of Braudel's *Mediterranean*, the aim of the conference and of the volume is to understand the influence of Braudel's interdisciplinary methodology on the practice of history rather than simply to assess the impact of his scholarship. The contributions thus discuss histories that have relied on the insights of geography, economics, sociology, anthropology, political science, and psychology. The result is a remarkably cohesive group of essays that both highlight Braudel's enduring influence on the field and offer significant revisions to his vision of the Mediterranean.

The collection as a whole highlights the way Braudel's approach undervalued human agency, social constructs, and ideologies as shaping change. Bartolomé Yun Casalilla and Jan De Vries use the conceptual tools of economics to understand the complex dynamics between city and countryside and the process of urbanization in the sixteenth century. Ottavia Niccoli looks at the way metaphors of society as a body shaped political thought and behavior, M.J. Rodriguez-Salgado questions Braudel's rejection of political history in understanding Philip II's Mediterranean world, and Jack Goldstone advocates viewing cycles of protest and revolt in the long-term in order to better understand causes and patterns. Looking beyond the Mediterranean, Mark Elvin criticizes Braudel's categorization of Chinese economic development, and Anthony Pagden argues that Braudel's understanding of an "Atlantic Mediterranean" ignores the radical ruptures in European understandings of time caused by the discovery of the New World. Anthropological studies have traditionally contributed a great deal to concepts of Mediterranean unity, and Peter Burke's contribution points to the value of historical anthropology — for instance, studies that concentrate on honor and shame, moral values, patronage, hospitality and friendship, or on sacred geography and ritual culture — in writing a history of Mediterranean culture.[10] Burke proposes that the anthropological concept of "symbolic boundaries" can be useful to historians analyzing the cultural and material exchanges on frontiers and borders.

The potential pollution that can result from crossing these boundaries gives a title to the most significant re-conceptualization of Mediterranean history in the last decade, Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell's *The Corrupting Sea*.[11] The work itself draws on a wide range of

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[9] *Early Modern History and the Social Sciences. Testing the Limits of Braudel's Mediterranean*, ed. John A. Marino (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2002).

[10] See also Burke's *The French Historical Revolution: The Annales School, 1929-89* (Cambridge: Polity, 1990); and idem, *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy: Essays on Perception and Communication* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

[11] Key reviews of the book include E. Fentress and J. Fentress, "The Hole in the Doughnut," *Past and Present* 173 (2001): 203-19; Brent D. Shaw, "Challenging Braudel: A New Vision of the Mediterranean," *Journal of Roman*

disciplines, including significant archeological and ecological data, as well as relying on economics, geography, and anthropology. The authors began with a search for the common denominators of the Mediterranean "before Braudel," that is, before the sixteenth century. The core of their analysis focuses on antiquity and the early middle ages, although the volume includes evidence from prehistory all the way to the twentieth century. For Horden and Purcell, the history of the Mediterranean is defined by two categories: fragmentation and connectivity. They argue that the Mediterranean region is distinguished by its unusual ecological diversity, a diversity that creates a fragmented landscape of "microregions" that are defined by both their physical environment and by patterns of human interaction with that environment. In fact, they argue, each microregion is not just the sum of its parts, but is defined by constantly changing interactions with other microregions. This dense web of interaction is what they call connectivity, and it is driven by the need to manage risk through exchange. The authors conclude that "dense fragmentation complemented by a striving towards control of communications may be an apt summary of the Mediterranean past" (25).

That the book is not an "easy read" is perhaps an understatement; over 500 pages of theoretically sophisticated and dense text are accompanied by 112 pages of bibliographical essays that demonstrate the authors' erudition and command of the secondary literature. The volume is organized thematically rather than chronologically. In the first section, the authors explain how they envision a "history of the Mediterranean" as something separate from "history in the Mediterranean." The methodology they propose is "historical ecology," meaning the study of the complex interactions between humanity and the environment across a long time period. (45-49, 54) In the second section, the authors offer four cases studies of particular locations, all drawn from the eastern half of the Mediterranean: Biqa, Lebanon; Etruria, Italy, the Green Mountains of Cyrenaica in Libya, and Melos, Greece. Section three examines the ecology and the economy of Mediterranean food cultivation, and section four looks at the intersection of sacred geographies and the physical environment. The fifth section analyses the way scholars have used anthropology to create ideas about unity and continuity. Furthermore, the authors have announced their intention to publish a second volume of the work, entitled *Liquid Continents*, where they will discuss climate, disease, demography, and the relationship between the Mediterranean and other regions.[12]

In Horden and Purcell's vision, the Mediterranean is unified chronologically as well as geographically. The authors see one of the benefits of their methodology as its resistance to efforts to periodize and divide the region's past; rather, they propose, "we must be prepared to see the events which we study on a smooth scale stretching into the distant past" (326). This approach downplays the effects of climactic change over time, and sharp breaks and discontinuities between historical eras are replaced by a more gradual waxing and waning of connectivity. For instance, the authors admit that commerce in the Roman period was more intense than was the case for the early medieval age, but they reject the idea of a complete rupture in communications between the northern and southern shores of the sea.

Archaeology 14 (2001): 419-53; Anthony Molho, *Journal of World History* 13 (2002): 486-92; Paolo Squatriti, "Review Article: Mohammed, the Early Medieval Mediterranean, and Charlemagne," *Early Medieval Europe* 11 (2002): 263-79; Kate Fleet, "The Mediterranean," *Journal of Early Modern History* 6 (2002): 62-73; Edward Peters, 'Quid Nobis cum pelago? The New Thassology and the Economic History of Europe," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 34 (2003): 49-61.
[12] In addition to the brief description in *The Corrupting Sea*, 4, Purcell discusses the issues treated in the second volume in his "The Boundless Sea of Unlikeness? On Defining the Mediterranean," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 18:2 (2003): 9-29.

One of great benefits of *The Corrupting Sea* for the field is the way it has spurred discussions between specialists from normally discrete disciplines. The volume of essays *Rethinking the Mediterranean*, which grew out of a 2001 conference at Columbia University's Center for the Ancient Mediterranean, offers a thoughtful, critical reaction to the methodological and interpretative challenges the book poses.[13] Horden and Purcell themselves each contribute individual essays on travel and taxation, respectively, and the two are allowed to respond to their critics and given the final word. Several of the essays — Harris, Van de Mieroop, Chanotis, Bowerstock, and Bagnall — take the ancient world as their subject, but the theoretical issues they raise reach into the medieval and early modern periods as well.

The volume as a whole queries the geographical borders of the Mediterranean as a region, as well as exploring the conceptual limits to the field of Mediterranean Studies. Susan Alcock's contribution, which looks at the emerging field of Mediterranean studies through the lens of the increasing numbers of scholarly journals devoted to the iterations of the subject, illustrates that the concept of Mediterranean studies can encompass an almost infinitely elastic range of approaches. David Abulafia's essay asks how far the idea of the Mediterranean can be stretched in geographical terms. If "the Mediterranean" is simply a zone of exchange and connectivity, why not a Saharan Mediterranean? A Caribbean Mediterranean? A Japanese Mediterranean? Alain Bresson's contribution also compares the Mediterranean zone of connectivity and exchange to the Atlantic and Indian oceans, finding that "the concentration of wealth and the movement of ideas" made the Mediterranean unique in the ancient world. (112) The anthropologist Michael Herzfeld, a well-known critic of the idea of Mediterranean, here qualifies his objections to the idea of a "Mediterranean" identity.[14] He asserts that he does not deny that there are common cultural characteristics in the regions bordering the Mediterranean, but he asks how and why inhabitants of these countries are "apt to encourage precisely such sweeping essentializing of 'their' cultural area" (45). He suggests contemporary individuals who are claiming Mediterranean identity are doing so consciously, self-stereotyping, and that researchers should take care in accepting these assertions at face value.

If Horden and Purcell's work push the chronological boundaries of the Mediterranean almost to prehistory, Faruk Tabak's *The Waning of the Mediterranean* proposes a chronological endpoint — the seventeenth century — to the patterns of interaction that characterized the medieval and early modern Mediterranean basin.[15] He rejects the idea that the loss of the spice trade and the economic turn to the Atlantic dissolved economic coherence of the region and criticizes theories of Mediterranean decline that turn to particular regional factors to explain the fading of Spanish, Ottoman, Genoese, and Venetian fortunes. Tabak identifies several long-term shifts in Mediterranean patterns of economic activity. Venetian and Genoese merchants gradually moved the cultivation of profitable crops like sugar and cotton away from the Mediterranean and into the Atlantic while Dutch and English merchants simultaneously moved commercial grain production northward. In response, Mediterranean cultivators again turned to traditional tree crops (olive and grape), causing a distinct change in human land-use patterns. In the period 1450-1650, the coastal plains had been inhabited and brought under cultivation, but in the mid-seventeenth century, both habitation and agriculture slid uphill. Tabak writes, "The shift in the epicenter of the basin's economic life from its lower altitudes to its higher elevations was

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[13] *Rethinking the Mediterranean*, ed. W.V. Harris (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

[14] See Herzfeld, "The Horns of the Mediterraneanist Dilemma," *American Ethnologist* 11 (1984): 439-54.

[15] Faruk Tabak, *The Waning of the Mediterranean, 1550-1870: A Geohistorical Approach* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008).

therefore a momentous change and represented a dramatic departure from the landscape the region presented to the traveler in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries." (14).

Tabak explains the shift in terms of climate, political economy, and demography. A "Little Ice Age" brought wetter and colder conditions to the region and meant greater climatic variability. The periodic flooding of the coastal plains that resulted was made worse by centuries of deforestation and erosion on the hillsides. Tabak dates the end of this cycle of habitation and productivity to the nineteenth century, when a warmer and drier climate and the anti-malarial drug quinine once again encouraged the cultivation of the lowland plains and marshes. One of the great benefits of this book is the inclusion of evidence from all parts of the Mediterranean — it considers the Anatolian as well as the Italian mountains and plains. While accepting the fundamental premise that the Mediterranean is a unified region, Tabak gives a greater role than either Braudel or Horden and Purcell to society and state structures in shaping patterns of human interaction with the environment.

Narrating the Mediterranean

The lavishly produced volume *The Mediterranean in History*, edited by David Abulafia, offers a sweeping and readable narration of the history of interactions between the civilizations that surrounded the sea. The volume places more emphasis on politics, trade, and warfare than environmental factors as forces that shaped Mediterranean history and differs from Horden and Purcell's treatment by consistently giving a much greater role to human agency and in dividing the region's past into discrete eras. The essays follow a largely chronological framework, beginning with the earliest human communities in the Mediterranean and continuing through the present day. Contributions from three ancient historians trace the gradual integration of the Mediterranean into a space unified first by cultural constructs and commercial networks and then — in the age of Rome — by government and administrative structures as well. Marlene Suano's essay looks at the trade links and cultural contacts between the four major kingdoms of the Bronze Age — the Hittites, the Egyptians, the Minoans, and the Mesopotamians — and traces the development of the Mediterranean-wide Mycenaean and Phoenician trading networks. Mario Torelli's contribution describes the struggle between Phoenicians and Greeks over profitable colonies and trading posts. Geoffrey Rickman explains Rome's increasing economic and then political and military engagement with the Mediterranean, culminating in the creation of what the Romans called *Mare Nostrum* (Our Sea).

The subsequent four essays examine the religious and political divisions that arose after the fall of Rome, while continuing to emphasize the cultural and commercial connections created by trade and travel. John Pryor looks at the break-up of Roman unity, focusing on the outside invaders — Vandals, Arabs, and Bulgars — and the political fragmentation they brought. Michel Balard's essay examines the era of Christian conquest, tracing the growing naval and commercial strength of the Italian city-states from the eleventh through the fifteenth centuries. Balard sees the Crusades as a part of this process, stating that "the direct effect of the crusades is the Mediterranean became a Latin Sea and Latin merchants displaced Jews and Muslim merchants" (190). Molly Greene argues that the Ottoman dominance of the region in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is often overlooked — undeservedly — because of scholars' focus on the Atlantic and the New World in the same period. Greene presents the Ottoman Empire as a fundamental part of the Mediterranean world that recreated and extended the imperial heritage of Byzantium, allowed for considerable cultural and religious diversity, and promoted trade and

reform projects. She attributes the Ottomans' eventual decline to larger structural factors, such as the increasing cost of galley warfare and the eastern drift of the luxury trade.[16]

Two final essays look at the northern European and then global influences on the Mediterranean in the eighteenth through twentieth centuries. Jeremy Black traces the increasing political, military, and cultural impact of northern Europeans, particularly the British and French, and the battles for political and military dominance they waged in the region during the turbulent eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Abulafia's concluding chapter looks at the impact of world war, nation-building in the Middle East, and mass tourism over the course of the twentieth century. Oliver Rackham's introductory article on the geological and biological patterns of the region's ecology provides an interesting counterpoint to the consideration of the region's contemporary history, as he highlights the recent changes caused by intensive human habitation and exploitation of natural resources, particularly water use.[17] He suggests that fundamental environmental structures and patterns are being radically altered and that "Mediterranean lands are now in a transitional state not typical of their history" (33).

Taken together, the essays all emphasize trade and commerce as vehicles for cultural exchange and also include migration and warfare as forms of interaction. The volume's gorgeous illustrations almost constitute an essay in and of themselves, as they provide compelling visual evidence of developments in naval technology, military encounters, and artistic representations of the Mediterranean landscape. The individual contributions, with the possible exception of Greene's essay on the Ottomans, do not offer revisionist views or overturn any long-held scholarly conclusions, but the great benefit of the volume is its comparative perspective. Each of the essays moves out of the particular disciplinary specialization and places the period under consideration into a wide context, which allows the reader to consider the question of unity and patterns of interaction in of Mediterranean civilization across a truly *longue durée*.

Commerce and travel as a mechanism of cultural exchange

Given the new theoretical understandings of the Mediterranean as a place defined by "connectivity" or dense networks of interaction, it is certainly no surprise that scholars have continued to use trade as an index of cross-cultural encounter. One of the emerging questions in studies of cross-cultural commerce is the transformative nature of that trade.[18] The majority of the scholarship on merchant culture of the Mediterranean has focused on the central role of Italian merchants as agents of exchange in the markets of the eastern Mediterranean. One of the most promising recent developments in the literature are specialists — particularly Ottomanists — who consider both sides of the trade. Kate Fleet's book *European and Islamic Trade in the Early Ottoman State* is an excellent example of this trend.[19] Fleet's first argument, that international trade was important to early Ottoman sultans and that they shaped policy to further this goal, is amply documented in ten chapters on individual products – slaves, grain, wine, alum,

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[16] See her elaboration of these ideas in "Beyond the Northern Invasion: The Mediterranean in the Seventeenth Century," *Past and Present* 174:1(2002): 42-71.

[17] For a more in-depth treatment of these issues, see A.T. Grove and Oliver Rackham, *The Nature of Mediterranean Europe: an Ecological History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).

[18] See Philip Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Kenneth Pomeranz and Steven Topik, *The World That Trade Created: Society, Culture, and the World Economy, 1400 - the Present* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1999).

[19] Kate Fleet, *European and Islamic Trade in the Early Ottoman State: The Merchants of Genoa and Turkey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

cloth, and metals. She convincingly argues that the early Ottoman state should be considered as an essential part of the Mediterranean economy, not just as a source of goods but as a active and rational actor. Fleet also suggests that "Ottoman economic acumen met Genoese capital, expertise and self-interest" (141). The evidence Fleet presents for the second part of her thesis, that Italian (mostly Genoese) and Ottoman merchants actively collaborated, is not as convincingly demonstrated, but the work as a whole is a welcome corrective to the idea of an active and progressive West meeting a passive and declining East. Fleet's work contributes to the by-now significant body of work by such scholars as Halil Inalcik, Suraiya Faroqhi, Cemal Kefadar, and Palmira Brummett, all of whom have demonstrated that notions of Ottoman economic passivity are simply not tenable.[20]

Merchants were only one of the many groups that crossed Mediterranean boundaries and acted as agents of cultural exchange. Ambassadors, exiles, renegades, sailors, captives, and translators traversed the same maritime networks, creating a transnational Mediterranean population that defies easy categorizations. The vast majority of these travelers left little or no trace in the historical record; scholars have long relied on the narratives of those who did to trace the pathways and possibilities created by Mediterranean connectivity and to describe the ways individual lived experience intersected with larger social and economic structures.[21] Several recent studies use these liminal individuals and groups to interrogate the construction of national and religious identities in the pre-modern period. This literature rejects oppositional notions of East-West and Muslim-Christian, arguing that these rhetorical categories did not correspond to lived experience. Instead, recent works by Natalie Zemon Davis, Mercedes García-Arenal and Gerard Wiegers, and Eric Dursteler present Mediterranean identity as a contingent process of negotiation.[22] Rather than seeing subjects who exchanged an Eastern identity for a Western one, a Christian identity for a Muslim one, or an Ottoman identity for a Venetian one, the above works all portray complicated and ambiguous interactions of individuals, cultures, and ideologies as they slide past imaginary boundaries.

The protagonist's lament that opens Amin Maalouf's novel *Leo Africanus*, "I come from no country, from no city, from no tribe. I am the son of the road, my country is the caravan, my life the most unexpected of voyages," articulates the dislocations and ruptures in identity

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[20] See Palmira Brummett, *Ottoman Seapower and Levantine Diplomacy in the Age of Discovery* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994); Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: the Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Suraiya Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire and the World around It* (London: I.B. Taurus, 2004); Leslie Peirce, "Changing Perceptions of the Ottoman Empire: The Early Centuries," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 19 (2004); Caroline Finkel, *Osman's Dream: The Story of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1923* (New York: Basic Books, 2006) as well as her essay "Myths of Ottoman Decay" in *Re-Orienting the Renaissance: Cultural Exchanges with the East*, ed. Gerald MacLean, 148-74. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

[21] A number of individual contributions to the edited collections under review here discuss European travelers' accounts of the Muslim east; space constraints preclude a consideration of each essay individually, but see Arbel in *Mediterranean Urban Culture 1400-1700*, ed. Alexander Cowan (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 2000); Howard, Rogerson, and Mansel in *Re-Orienting the Renaissance*; Salzmann in *A Faithful Sea*, and Armstrong, Saïd, and Marshall in *Rethinking the Mediterranean*.

[22] Eric Dursteler*, Venetians in Constantinople: Nation, Identity, and Coexistence in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006); Natalie Zemon-Davis, *Trickster Travels. A Sixteenth Century Muslim Between Worlds.* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006); Mercedes García-Arenal and Gerard Wiegers, *A Man of Three Worlds. Samuel Pallache, a Moroccan Jew in Catholic and Protestant Europe*, translated by Martin Beagles, foreword by David Nirenberg and Richard L. Kagan (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003)

experienced by many in the early modern Mediterranean world.[23] Maalouf fictionalizes the extraordinary story of a real border crosser, alternately known as Al-Hasan al-Wazzan, Giovanni Leone, and Yuhanna al-Asad. Davis's *Trickster Travels* chases this elusive traveler through the archives, using his story as a vehicle to "explore how a man moved between different polities, made use of different cultural and social resources, and entangled or separated them so as to survive, discover, write, make relationships and think about society and himself" (11). Born a Muslim in Granada, al-Wazzan's family left Iberia for Fez after Ferdinand and Isabella's conquest of the city in 1492. As an adult, al-Wazzan served as an itinerant diplomat, spy, scholar, and businessman across North and West Africa until he was captured by a Spanish corsair in 1518. Enslaved and sent to the pope in Rome, al-Wazzan converted — at least externally — to Christianity and became Giovanni Leone, author of the geographical treatise *History and Description of Africa*. He left Rome in 1527, after the city was sacked by Hapsburg armies, and returned with little trace to North Africa. Davis's account of his story aims to reconstruct not just his movements but his mentalities — what ideas and attitudes he brought with him from Islamic North Africa and how these were shaped and changed by his time in European culture. The book elegantly suggests that while al-Wazzan's journeys were extraordinary, his complex, situational, and often ambiguous deployment of different identities was not.

Like Davis, García-Arenal and Wiegers also recover an extraordinary journey through painstaking archival research, using the life of Samuel Pallache to open a window onto the conflicts and co-existence of Muslim, Catholic, and Protestant worlds in the sixteenth century. Pallache was born around 1550 in Fez, Morocco to a family of exiled Spanish Jews. His checkered career as an ambassador, spy, businessman, and privateer took him from Fez to Madrid, Amsterdam, and London. The authors use Pallache's varied and often elusive endeavors in each location to evoke the particularities of the early modern world in a moment of flux, as Catholic and Protestant religious loyalties divided Christian Europe and as new economic forces changed patterns of commercial interaction. Pallache's passages between cultures allow the authors to show how Jews like Pallache were ideally situated to acting as commercial and diplomatic intermediaries in the era of emerging national and religious loyalties. "The sinuous and elusive Pallache lived on the margins, making constant use of his ability to straddle the borders between two worlds in conflict with one another" (xx).

Pallache and al-Wazzan's lives were both shaped by forced migration, an experience they shared with hundreds of thousands of their contemporaries. The Spanish expulsion of the Jews in 1492 was followed by Portugal's in 1497, and Muslim and crypto-Muslims were expelled from Iberia in 1501 and again in 1609-1614. In order to avoid expulsion, many Muslims and Jews converted to Christianity. The sincerity of these conversions is a matter of some debate, but the new converts were then subject to the Inquisition, and those avoiding or escaping inquisitorial inquiry also strategically drifted across borders and adopted alternate identities.[24] Pallache and al-Wazzan's life histories help us to understand how these border crossings worked on an individual level, but the vast majority of historical sources consider border crossers in their communal context. For instance, the Iberian expulsions created a diaspora of Jews and Muslims in Fez, Palermo, Livorno, Venice, Alexandria, and Istanbul, among other places, and the states

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[23] Amin Maalouf, *Leo Africanus*, trans. Peter Sluglett (New York: New Amsterdam, 1986),1.

[24] *See Inquisitorial Inquiries: Brief Lives of Secret Jews and Other Heretics*, ed. Richard Kagan and Abigail Dyer (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004) for examples and an introduction to the extensive literature on conversion and religious identity in Iberia.

and societies that hosted them approached them as minority communities.[25] The Mediterranean slave trade, while often overshadowed by human traffic in the early modern Atlantic, brought significant numbers of Christians and Muslims into contact with ethnic, religious, and racial difference.

Scholars of medieval and early modern slavery in the Mediterranean are turning their attention from the economic implications of slavery to its role in emerging ideas of race, ethnicity, and status in the late medieval and early modern period. The vast majority of medieval slaves were ethnically as well as religiously different from their Italian masters, and Sally McKee finds the significance of medieval slavery in Italians' reactions to these differences. In several journal articles as well as in her 2000 monograph *Uncommon Dominion: Venetian Crete and the Myth of Ethnic Purity*, McKee has used a rich variety of notarial records to question scholars' assumptions about ethnic and racial identities.[26] In her work on Venetian Crete, McKee argues that legal definitions of Latin and Greek identity did not correspond to lived reality, where social status and family structures complicated any easy categorization of individuals as Greek or Latin. McKee's more recent work on medieval slavery includes evidence from the Italian city states of Venice, Genoa, and Florence, as well as the Genoese and Venetian colonies in the Black Sea and eastern Mediterranean.[27] She examines the status of children born to slave women by free men and contends that in the fourteenth century Italian magistrates and jurists turned away from Roman law, by which children inherited their mothers' status, and increasingly assumed that these children inherited their fathers' free status. She argues that the impetus for this shift in legal principle and practice came from the fathers, who either out of affection or fear of extinction pressured magistrates to "make room in the family portrait" for these children (50). By contrasting the situation in the Italian city states with that in the colonial setting of Venetian Crete, she finds that the father's Western European ancestry was much more important in the colonies, because there ancestry was the justification for dividing a privileged minority from the rest of the population. Thus, she concludes, looking carefully at ancestry as a marker of status offers a way of understanding how ideas of race and ethnicity developed differently inside Western Europe and in colonies founded by Western Europeans outside Europe.

Steven Epstein has considered similar questions of ethnicity, identity, and discourses of difference in medieval Italy in two recent monographs, *Speaking of Slavery* and *Purity Lost*.[28] In *Speaking of Slavery*, Epstein examines the language used to describe slaves, slavery, and ethnic identity and contends that the medieval language of slavery shaped the ways contemporary Italians think about race and slavery. Epstein looks to late medieval Italy as a key moment in the ideological shift from an ancient Roman slavery that was not based on race to an early modern

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[25] Henry Kamen, in his contribution to *Early Modern History and the Social Sciences*, emphasizes local dynamics and the importance of community in his interpretation of the history of religious minorities in Iberia. Donatella Calabi's contribution to *Mediterranean Urban Culture* examines the physical definition of Jewish communities in European cities.

[26] McKee, "Greek Women in Latin Households of Fourteenth Century Crete," *Journal of Medieval History* 19 (1993): 229-49; idem, "Households in Fourteenth Century Venetian Crete," *Speculum* 70 (1995): 27-67; idem, *Uncommon Dominion: Venetian Crete and the Myth of Ethnic Purity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000).

[27] McKee, "Inherited Status and Slavery in Late Medieval Italy and Venetian Crete," *Past and Present* 182:1 (2004): 31-53.

[28] Steven A. Epstein, *Speaking of Slavery: Speaking of Slavery: Color, Ethnicity, and Human Bondage in Italy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001); idem, *Purity Lost: Transgressing Boundaries in the Eastern Mediterranean, 1000-1400* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).

Atlantic slave trade that was. Through a close reading of notarial documents and legal records, Epstein argues that medieval Italians "were conscious of color and associated bad traits and things with darker people" (23). In *Purity Lost*, Epstein argues that there was a particular world system in the eastern Mediterranean in the high medieval period, a system characterized by what he calls "mixed relationships," or frequent contacts between people who were thought to be separated by constructed boundaries of color, religion, language, and ethnicity. Using a variety of examples including diplomatic treaties, renegades, and the physiognomy of angels, Epstein argues that the skills required from individuals to survive and thrive in this world of mixed relationships shaped the larger patterns of commerce and warfare in the region.

As the slave trade shifted during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries from providing female domestic labor for households to providing male labor for galleys, European ideas about the connections between race and slavery also shifted, in large part because North African and Muslim corsair raids on European shipping and coastlines made it much more difficult to imagine slavery as something that did not happen to Europeans. There is a rich and growing literature on piracy and captivity in the Mediterranean as a whole, focusing in particular on the western Mediterranean. Nabil Matar, Daniel Vitkus, and Linda Colley, among others, have analyzed the "captivity narratives" of Englishmen who were ransomed or escaped from slavery on the Barbary coast.[29] These narratives were printed and performed throughout early modern England and played a significant role in defining national identity, and Gillian Weiss makes a similar argument in the case of early modern France.[30] Iberia, with its porous and often contested political and religious frontiers, has a long history of captivity, slavery, and ransom, as Javier Rodriquez's recent book makes clear.[31]

While piracy and enslavement existed throughout the early modern Mediterranean, Italy's extended coastlines, reliance on maritime commerce, and fragmented political organization meant that it was deeply involved in the interconnected exchanges of piracy and slavery. Robert Davis and Salvatore Bono have examined both sides of this exchange between 1500 and 1800, Davis in his work on Christians captured and enslaved by Muslims and the effects on Italian society and Bono in his work on Muslims captured and enslaved in Italy in the same period.[32] The scale of the two enterprises was uneven: Davis asserts that the number of Europeans

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[29] Linda Colley, "Going Native, Telling Tales: Captivity, Collaborations, and Empire," *Past and Present* 168:1 (2000): 170-93; idem, *Captives* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2002); Nabil I. Matar, *Britain and Barbary, 1589-1689* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005); idem, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); Daniel J. Vitkus, *Turning Turk: English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570-1630* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); idem, *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption: Barbary Captivity Narratives from Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).

[30] Gillian Weiss, "Barbary Captivity and the French Idea of Freedom," *French Historical Studies* 28:2 (2005): 231-64.

[31] Jarbel Rodriguez, *Captives and their Saviors in the Medieval Crown of Aragon* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2007).

[32] Robert C. Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters: White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast, and Italy, 1500-1800*. Early Modern History Studies in Society and Culture (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003); see also his "Counting European Slaves on the Barbary Coast," *Past and Present* 172:1 (2001): 87-124 and idem, "The Geography of Slaving in the Early Modern Mediterranean, 1500-1800," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 37 (2007): 57-74; Salvatore Bono, *Schiavi Musulmani nell'Italia Moderna. Galeotti, vu' cumpra', domestici.* Università degli Studi di Perugia, Pubblicazioni 8 (Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1999); for the later period, see his collection of previously published essays in *Lumi e corsair. Europa e Magreb nel Settecento* (Perugia: Morlacci Editore, 2005).

enslaved by Muslims between 1500 and 1800 reached almost a million, rivaling if not exceeding the Atlantic traffic in Africans in the same period. Bono's careful excavation of the rich Italian archives finds between 90,000 and 120,000 Muslim slaves in Italy in the same period, mostly concentrated in the port cities of Genoa, Livorno, Civitavecchia, Naples, and Palermo. Furthermore, the treatment of Muslim slaves in Italy was conditioned by the large numbers of Italian slaves in North Africa; Italian authorities extended freedom of worship, permission to send letters home, and other privileges to ensure the same treatment for Italian slaves abroad. Bono sets his documentation of the little-discussed presence of Muslim slaves in Italy against European ideas of themselves as a slave-free society, drawing a comparison with contemporary attitudes toward the presence of the "extracomunitari" in Italy.

Davis uses European archives and narrative accounts to draw a harrowing picture of slave capture and treatment in North Africa. He argues that religion, not race, was the primary factor in Muslim enslavement of Christians, suggesting that corsairs based in Morocco and Algeria deliberately targeted Christian coastlines and Christian shipping in particular seeking revenge for the Spanish expulsion of Muslims from Granada in 1492. There were, of course, economic motivations for slave-taking as well, but Davis emphasizes the "spur of vengeance, as opposed to the bland workings of the marketplace, that made the Islamic slavers so much more aggressive and initially (one might say) successful in their work than their Christian counterparts" (xxv). The book is divided into three sections: the capture of slaves through piracy and coastal raiding, the slaves' lives in captivity, and the impact of slavery and slave redemption on Italian society. Davis confines his discussion to European accounts and experiences and does not engage with the question of slavery in the Ottoman world or discuss how the European captives might have been viewed by their captors, and the historian of Ottoman slavery Ehud Toledano has criticized Davis on this point.[33] In the final third of the book, Davis points to the heavy and often ruinous burdens capture and ransom placed on Italian communities. Giuseppe Bonafini's study of Italian captivity and ransom underscores this point, demonstrating the scale of ransoming efforts in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[34]

Piracy, slavery, and forced exile all contributed to the forced movement of peoples across the Mediterranean. But not all migrations were forced, as Dursteler's book and Greene's contribution to *A Faithful Sea* demonstrate. Greene argues that the new economic arrangements of the sixteenth century created a demand for maritime labor, and she traces the diaspora of Greek sailors and shipbuilders that made Greeks, and in particular Greek Cretans, a "pan Mediterranean" presence. Dursteler's book focuses on the Venetian nation in Constantinople in order to "illuminate the complex ways people of diverse religious, cultural, linguistic, and social backgrounds interacted and coexisted on a communal level" (19). Merchants and diplomats from Venice constituted the official core of the "nation," but Dursteler moves outwards to describe a much broader group of men and women, including Jews, Christian renegades, Latin-rite

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[33] Ehud Toledano, "European Slaves in the Ottoman Empire," *Journal of African History* 47 (2006):140-42. Anglophone studies of Ottoman slavery have concentrated more intensely on the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries than on the earlier period; in addition to Toledano's books, *As if Silent and Absent: Bonds of Enslavement in the Islamic Middle East* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007); idem, *Slavery and Abolition in the Ottoman Middle East* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998); see Hakam Erdem, *Slavery in the Ottoman Empire and its demise, 1800-1909* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), and the essays collected in *Ransom Slavery along Ottoman Borders: Early Fifteenth-Early Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. Géza Dávid and Pál Fodor (Leiden: Brill, 2007).
[34] Giuseppe Bonaffini, *Cattivi e redentori nel Mediterraneo tra XVI e XVII secolo* (Palermo: ILA Palma, 2003); see also his *Un mare di paura. Il Mediterraneo in éta moderna.* (Caltanissetta-Rome: Salvatire Sciascia Editore, 1997), a work which is primarily concerned with the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Ottomans, and Greeks, who were also an integral part of the Venetian nation. Dursteler uses this community as a case study of the complex and fluid definitions and redefinitions of identities and loyalties that shaped the Venetian-Ottoman encounter. He rejects the "Clash of Civilizations" model in favor of a more nuanced understanding of the compromises and cooperation that facilitated co-existence. Dursteler furthermore argues for the importance of countering the era's rhetoric of conflict with an understanding of the complexity of lived reality.

Commerce in the classics

But what role is there for Italian Studies in a field that privileges connectivity and exchange over fixed geographies? Paradoxically, one of the most promising areas of Italian contribution to Mediterranean studies lies in the area to date least affected by theories of the Mediterranean: the high culture of the Italian Renaissance. It is now generally established that people and things moved around the Mediterranean even in periods of greatest religious or political tension, meaning that there was a constant exchange of goods and ideas between Muslim and Christian worlds. It is less clear what the results of this exchange were. In the field of art history, for instance, did objects just move from one culture to another, acquiring different meanings in the process, or did cross-cultural exchange result in new technologies and new forms of expression or understanding? Interestingly, while many art historians and literary scholars do focus on exchange between East and West, these fields have generally not adopted the vocabulary of "Mediterraneanism," which remains fixed in the social sciences.

Lisa Jardine and Jerry Brotton's *Global Interests* is perhaps better described by its subtitle, *Renaissance Art between East and West*.[35] The authors use specific artworks to examine moments of cultural exchange between Byzantine, European, and Ottoman elites. The book is composed of three chapters, each of which aims to describe a particular kind of "two-way material exchange across geographic and ideological boundaries" (7). The first chapter places Antonio Pisanello's 1438 portrait medal of the Byzantine emperor John VIII Paleologus in its larger cultural context, seeing it as commemoration not just of a specific ruler, but of the negotiation over union between the Greek Orthodox and Latin Christian churches at the Council of Florence. The second chapter explores the representations of battle scenes in a series of huge tapestries produced for French and Iberian monarchs in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, examining in particular the representations of Muslim and Native American "others." The third chapter connects European elites' desire for Arab and Persian horses to representations of those horses in portraits and in diplomatic ceremonies. The volume successfully demonstrates that European elites and Ottoman sultans shared a vocabulary of representing power and traces the multiple cultural meanings of the items European elites used to display their own power and wealth. The book is much more closely focused on Western examples than on the effects of cultural exchange in the Ottoman and Mamluk worlds, and as a result, the Muslim partners in the "exchange" appear rather passive.[36]

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[35] Jardine and Brotton, *Global Interests: Renaissance Art between East and West* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000). The authors separately explore similar themes in Jardine, *Worldly Goods*: A *New History of the Renaissance* (New York: Nan A. Talese Press, 1996); Brotton, *Trading Territories: Mapping the Early Modern World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997); idem, *The Renaissance Bazaar: From the Silk Road to Michelangelo* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
[36] Oleg Grabar, "Review essay," *The Art Bulletin* 85:1 (2003): 189-92.

Conceived on a much broader scale, Rosamund Mack's *Bazaar to Piazza* makes its focus on the Italian end of cultural exchange explicit. [37] The book looks at the transfer of material culture from the Islamic shores of the Mediterranean to the marketplaces of the Italian peninsula and at the representations of that material culture in the masterpieces of the Italian Renaissance. The volume is lavishly illustrated, and the images alone provide compelling visual evidence of the impact of Islamic visual culture on materials sold, produced, and represented in Italy between 1300 and 1600. Mack consciously moves away from painting, sculpture, and architecture to look at the decorative arts — silks, carpets, ceramics, glass, and inlaid brass. Her focus on these highly portable items allows Mack to go beyond monumental public displays and to look at the personal and domestic use and display of objects imported from the Islamic world. Mack not only documents the widespread circulation of imported textiles and ceramics, but argues that their popularity caused changes in Italian design and manufacture. For instance, the competition of patterned silks imported from the Islamic world spurred a "creative response" in the Italian textile industry that contributed to Italian textiles' success on European markets.[38] In contrast, carpets were recognized and represented as luxury objects, but not produced in Italy. As her title suggests, Mack sees the import of Oriental objects into Italy as driven by commercial exchange, but interestingly, that exchange does not necessarily lead to better cultural understanding. For instance, Italian artists regularly imitated calligraphic Arabic script and decorated clothes, books, and textiles in their paintings with pseudo-Arabic, revealing their fascination with the exotic as well as their misunderstanding and ignorance of the language's religious and cultural importance.

The field of architectural history is a fascinating place to pose the question of influence, because buildings, unlike carpets or vases, were not themselves physically transferred from one location to another. The incorporation of foreign stylistic or design elements into the built environment was thus clearly the result of deliberate and conscious appropriations on the part of architects, patrons, and artisans. Four recent monographs have set the production of particular monuments and the development of domestic and public spaces into the larger cultural context of the eastern Mediterranean. Two of the works — Deborah Howard's *Venice and the East* and Gülru Necipoğlu's *Age of Sinan* — look at the creation of new architectural vocabularies in the dominant, wealthy cultural centers of Venice and Istanbul.[39] In contrast, Maria Georgopoulou and Jill Caskey examine the development of urban, architectural, and decorative styles in the more peripheral locations of Venetian Crete and Norman and Angevin Amalfi.[40] At issue in all four works are the nuances and complexities of patrons' and builders' stylistic choices and the ways in which those choices were conditioned by local circumstance as well as by the wide variety of artistic and cultural models available in the eastern Mediterranean.

In *Venice and the East*, Howard examines the way Venetian travelers' experiences of Muslim cities were absorbed and transmitted into Venetian architectural traditions. She first

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[37] Rosamund E. Mack, *Bazaar to Piazza: Islamic Trade and Italian Art, 1300-1600* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002). There is also a rich discussion of exchanges in material culture and the impact of Islamic products on Italian artistic technology in the catalog that accompanied the Metropolitan Museum of Art exhibition *Venice and the Islamic World, 828-1797*, ed. Stefano Carboni (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

[38] Ibid., 48.

[39] Howard, Deborah. *Venice and the East: The Impact of the Islamic World on Venetian Architecture 1100-1500* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

[40] Maria Georgopoulou, *Venice's Mediterranean Colonies: Architecture and Urbanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Jill Caskey, *Art and Patronage in the Medieval Mediterranean: Merchant Culture in the Region of Amalfi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

carefully reconstructs the world view and experiences of Venetian merchants, who often spent years living in Alexandria or Damascus. In the vast majority of cases, these expatriate merchant communities were exclusively male, and the Venetian men, rather than assimilating into local society, eventually returned home. The effect of this pattern on the built environment was that communications between metropolis and trading colonies were regular and efficient, and a kaleidoscope of individual experiences and memories of the Mamluk Muslim world were eventually transported back to Venice. Howard argues that the result can be seen in the marriage of Northern Gothic and Islamic styles in Venice's built environment between 1100 and 1500, a style that featured vegetal ornament, pointed arches, delicate traceries, and low-relief carving. Separate chapters consider the Islamic impact on the basilica of San Marco, the Rialto market, palace architecture, and the Ducal Palace. Howard concludes that the deliberate incorporation of Islamic elements into the city's sacred, domestic, mercantile, and political geographies was part of Venice's self-definition as a commercial entrepot, as a hub of exchange with the Muslim east, and as a intermediate point on pilgrims' itineraries.

Necipoğlu's *Age of Sinan* examines the architectural culture of the Ottoman empire in the sixteenth century, where the royal architect Sinan's many monumental mosque constructions pioneered a new visual vocabulary that drew on models from the Islamic world as well as late Roman, early Byzantine, and Italian renaissance models. The work represents a significant and subtle reinterpretation of the classical period in Ottoman architecture; Necipoğlu argues that Sinan developed a "stratified system of architectural representation, which relied on a standardized vocabulary of repetitive canonical forms to express the status hierarchies of his patrons and the cultural prestige of the empire's center over its provinces."[41] Concentrating on Friday mosque complexes commissioned by the sultan, his family, and the multi-ethnic Ottoman ruling elite, she finds that Sinan's mosque designs responded to a complex set of "culturally defined notions of identity, memory, and decorum."[42] While Necipoğlu locates Sinan's constructions in their Ottoman social and religious contexts as well as in dialogue with architectural influences outside the empire's borders, it is the affinities she identifies with Italian Renaissance developments that are most relevant in the context of Mediterranean studies.

To demonstrate "overlooked parallels and veiled cross-cultural dialogues," Necipoğlu interweaves the evolution of sultanic mosques in post 1453-Istanbul with the construction history of St. Peter's in Rome, an approach that allows her to move past interpretations of cross-cultural "borrowing" or "copying" of stylistic and architectural elements.[43] Rather, she sees the simultaneous projects of urban renewal and domed, central plan sanctuaries in Rome and Istanbul as evidence of the pope's and the sultan's competing claims to imperial and spiritual hegemony, claims that rested in part on the revival of a shared Romano-Byzantine past. Using Ottoman and European sources, she painstakingly reconstructs the slender documentary trail of the cross-cultural exchange of architectural knowledge, which was a two-way exchange of eyewitness descriptions, architectural treatises, prints, and plans that were exchanged by travelers, merchants, and diplomats. In a separate section, Necipoğlu suggests that the composition of Sinan's autobiography was a response to Italian discourses on artistic genius, self-representation, and individuality.[44] Necipoğlu's presentation of Sinan as an artist engaged in a vital and ongoing dialogue with Italian and Islamic pasts and presents highlights the critical insights that can be

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[41] Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, 20.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid., 82-103.
[44] Ibid., 135-46.

gained by integrating Ottoman perspectives into an understanding of Italian cultural production in the early modern period.

Georgopoulou's and Caskey's works also situate the fertile and hybrid nature of the built environment in Crete and Amalfi among the cross-cultural currents of the medieval Mediterranean, but their examples demonstrate how this assimilation was conditioned by political and cultural restraints. Georgopoulou analyses the built environment of Candia (Herakleion) during the first three centuries of Venetian rule (1204-1500), looking at the Venetian state's deliberate and careful adoption of Byzantine styles and concluding that it was this "exchange of cultural forms that allowed the colonizers to maintain a smooth transition from the former Byzantine to the new Venetian hegemony"(3). She enriches her case study of Candia with comparisons to other Venetian civic centers on Crete as well as in Modon, Coron, and Negroponte and elegantly recreates the ritual and sacred geography of Latin Christian and Greek Orthodox encounter in the colonial context. In addition to the overtly political construction of walls and administrative structures, Georgopoulou looks at the way churches, patron saints, and relics were used to create a sacred landscape that promoted a Venetian version of Latin Christianity but that mitigated open conflict between Greek and Latin.

Caskey's study of medieval Amalfi focuses on private rather than state patronage and on domestic rather than public architecture, but it also provides important insights into the way the patronage choices of the merchant elite of Amalfi drew on a variety of Mediterranean influences to create buildings and artworks that were distinctive in their hybridity. The core of her study are the Rufolo family's thirteenth-century commissions, which include a residential complex in Ravello and a pulpit, tomb, and altarpiece in the cathedrals of Ravello and Scala. Comparing these works to other extant examples in the region, Caskey reads this artistic sensibility as evidence of *mercatantia*, a set of practices tied to commerce that evoke the often eclectic and inclusive cultural framework of a merchant society. For instance, she argues that the residential complexes of Amalfi, which incorporate many elements from Fatimid North Africa, are not simply examples of cross-cultural borrowing but that they demonstrate a "keen awareness of the decorative, formal, and ideological underpinnings" of diverse housing types (11). Caskey argues that the merchants of Amalfi were deliberately and consciously creating a visual culture that set them apart and which thrived through the fourteenth century, when styles originating in the Angevin court at Naples began to dominate. Both Georgopoulou and Caskey's works illustrate the variety and diversity of stylistic developments in Italian Renaissance art that took place outside the traditional centers.

Intellectual history

Several new works in the field of Renaissance intellectual history investigate interaction and exchange across a perceived East-West cultural divide.[45] Nancy Bisaha's *Creating East and*

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[45] The classics in this field: Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press,1960) and Richard Southern, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 1962) have now been updated by *Western Views of Islam in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Perception of Other,* ed. David Blanks and Michael Frassetto (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999); *Images of the Other: Europe and the Muslim World before 1700,* ed. David Banks (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1997); John V. Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002; and idem, *Sons of Ishmael: Muslims through European Eyes in the Middle Ages* (Gainsville: University Press of Florida, 2008).

West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks and Margaret Meserve's *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought* both look at ways Italian humanists imagined the inhabitants of the opposite shores of Mediterranean.[46] Both works argue that these Italian understandings of the Muslim world are important not for what they tell us about the lived experience of interaction between individuals in the Mediterranean, but for what they reveal about Italian — and by extension European — understandings of their own collective identity.

Bisaha examines the portrayal of the Ottoman Turks in the works of over 30 humanist scholars, most concentrated in fifteenth-century Italy. She positions her study firmly within the field of the Renaissance, as well as within the scholarship on cross-cultural exchange, asserting that "humanist reactions to the Ottoman Turks are a legacy of the Renaissance no less important than the dignity of man, republican thought, and three-point perspective in painting" (11). Bisaha draws a nuanced picture of humanists' reactions to the Ottomans, arguing that while humanists in large part rejected the medieval binary opposition of Christian vs. non-Christian for interpreting other cultures, they "created a darker heritage to replace it." Drawing on classical sources, some humanists applied Greco-Roman models of "invading barbarians" to the Turks, portraying them as enemies of classical civilization. Other humanists embraced the "more peaceful, relativistic aspects of the humanist tradition." Both strands of thought, according to Bisaha, contributed to an influential and persistent habit of thought in Europe that contrasted a civilized West to an uncultured and barbarous East.

While she relies on many of the same authors as Bisaha does, Meserve focuses more narrowly on the humanists' histories of the Ottomans. She finds that humanist historians such as Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini (later Pope Pius II), Andrea Biglia, and Theodore Gaza presented the Ottoman Turks as barbarians who destroyed cultures and civilizations and who had no legitimate title to rule or even to reside in the "civilized" Mediterranean world. Meserve's methodological innovation is to distinguish humanists' histories of Ottomans from writings on other Muslim states — Mamluks, Timurids, and "Saracen" Arabs, who appear as "good" Islamic empires in contrast with the barbarous, cruel, and illegitimate Ottomans. This approach highlights the distance not just between "Christian" and "Islamic" civilizations, but sets the "barbarous" Ottomans apart from the rest of civilized Mediterranean world. Meserve does not attribute easy religious or political motives to any of her humanist authors, offering instead a complex and nuanced reading of the creation of these histories where the authors had to "negotiate a series of competing imperatives: the pursuit of historical truth, the production of political propaganda, the strength of their personal convictions, and (very often) the promotion of their own careers" (3). One of humanist movement's intellectual innovations was the emergence of an "objective" history, and Meserve looks at the shaky growth of that objectivism as it was applied to the history of the Ottoman Turks, finding that there were self-imposed limits on humanist claims about Turkish history. For instance, humanists rejected the medieval idea that the Turks traced their ancestry to Trojans, but retained the idea found in classical authors that that Ottomans were descendents of the barbarous Scythians.

Humanists' reactions to the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453 is a particularly interesting example for questions of the relationship between rhetoric and reality. As both Bisaha and Meserve note, humanist propaganda described the sack of the city in graphic terms, focusing in particular on the charge that the Ottomans had destroyed the Greek libraries of Constantinople

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[46] Nancy Bisaha, *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Margaret Meserve, *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

as evidence of Ottoman barbarism and distain for classical learning.[47] Contemporary scholarship, in contrast, has emphasized the Ottoman sultan Mehmed II's engagement with Italian Renaissance culture, pointing to his construction projects, library of Greek and Latin classics, and requests for Italian court artists as evidence of his interest in the Romano-Byzantine past and his participation in a shared elite culture of ostentatious display.[48] How, then, did the audiences for these humanist texts reconcile the portrayals of uncivilized Ottoman barbarians with the ongoing — and very public — artistic and cultural exchanges between Italy and Anatolia? While Bisaha admits that many fifteenth-century Italians knew the humanist image of the Ottomans was inaccurate, she also argues that the scholarship characterizing Mehmed II as interested in a classical past and in Italian Renaissance culture have exaggerated what she calls his "modest patronage record" and non-military interests in the West.[49] Therefore, she states, since Western Renaissance definitions of "civilization" were narrowly focused on a particular understanding of the classical past, humanist images of Ottomans as uncivilized barbarians resonated with their audiences. Bisaha's contention about Mehmed's patronage and cultural concerns is directly contradicted by the picture of Ottoman Istanbul drawn by Necipoğlu, Inalcik, and Raby.[50] The disparity in perspectives highlights the need for greater integration between Ottoman and Italian specialists in order to more fully understand the contours of a shared Mediterranean past.

Robert Irwin's article in the collection of essays *Re-Orienting the Renaissance* also looks at Italian Renaissance ideas about Muslims, although he focuses on philosophic and theological culture. Petrarch famously condemned the Hispano-Islamic philosopher Averröes (Ibn Rushd) and rejected scholastic Averroist thought; Irwin sees this as evidence of a series of misreadings and misunderstandings in the cultural transfer of philosophical texts. Petrarch's access to Averröes's Aristotelian translations and commentaries was through medieval scholastic translations, and Irwin suggests that Petrarch's understanding of what Averröes actually thought was slight at best. Nonetheless, Petrarch's hostility toward Averroist thought represented a turn away from Arabic learning in late medieval Italian thought, and Averröes was the last Arab philosopher translated into Latin until the seventeenth century. Irwin's article identifies a possible question for future scholars to answer: why were Italians disengaging with the substance of Arab learning at the same moment they were becoming more interested in the material culture of the Islamic world?

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[47] Bisaha, 60-93; Meserve, 66.

[48] In addition to the works cited below, see Jardine and Brotton, *Global Interests,* 32-42; Jardine, *Worldy Goods*, 229-75; and Julian Raby, "Pride and Prejudice: Mehmed the Conqueror and the Italian Portrait Medal," in *Italian Medals*, ed. J.G. Pollard, 171-94 (Washington, DC: National Gallery, 1987).

[49] Bisaha, 73-74. Her assessment of Ottoman cultural interests in based on Franz Babinger's 1953 *Mehmed the Conqueror and His Time,* trans. Ralph Manheim (Princeton: Princeton University Press, rev. ed 1978); she also cites Julian Raby, "East and West in Mehmed the Conqueror's Library," *Bulletin du bibliophile* (1987): 299-321 and Jardine and Brotton's *Global Interests,* although she disagrees with their analysis. Surprisingly, she does not cite any of Necipoğlu's works on Mehmed's architectural and artistic patronage, which present a very different reading of his cultural commitments than that found in Babinger. See Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapi Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), esp. 4-21; idem, "Life on an Imperial Monument: Hagia Sophia after Byzantium," in *Hagia Sophia: From the age of Justinian to the Present*, ed. Robert Mark and Ahmet Çakmak, p. 195-225 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

[50] Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 82-87; idem, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power*; Halil Inalcik, "The Policy of Mehmed II towards the Greek population of Istanbul and the Byzantine Buildings of the City," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 23 (1970): 213-49; Julian Raby, "Mehmet the Conqueror's Greek Scriptorum," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 37 (1983): 15-34; see also the essays in *Bellini and the East*, ed. Caroline Campbell and Alan Chong (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).

Renaissance innovations in philosophy were matched by the formation of a distinctive literary culture, and three recently published collections of essays ask how cross-cultural exchange shaped the Italian contribution to a "Mediterranean" literature. *Re-Orienting the Renaissance*, edited by Gerald MacLean, "insists that we think again whenever we hear the term "Renaissance" being used casually to describe an exclusively European movement involving the recovery of exclusively European ideas, values, and attitudes from Antiquity."[51] *A Faithful Sea*, edited by Adnan Husain and K.E. Fleming, looks at the religious cultures of the region and is particularly concerned to incorporate often-neglected Islamic perspectives. *Mediterraneanois*, edited by Roberta Morosini and Cristina Perissinotto, aims to showcase the polyphony of literary and artistic voices that circulated in the region and, of the three collections, engages most directly with Italian culture.[52] There are three themes that connect the diverse contributions to these volumes: the representation of Muslim "others" in art and in literature, the circulation of narrative forms between Mediterranean societies, and the literary representation of the region's particular social environment, full of pilgrims, exiles, travelers, and renegades.

One group of essays examine the various ways negative stereotypes of Muslims and/or Ottomans were created, represented, or challenged in literary works. Michael Papio's contribution to *Mediterraneanois* presents the *Novellino* of Masuccio Salernitano as an articulation of popular anti-Muslim fears, focusing in particular on the fear of sexual contamination from male slaves, who in Southern Italy were largely Muslim and of African origin. Morosini's contribution to the same volume analyses the figure of Mohammed in Alexandre du Pont's 1278 *Roman de Mahomet*, the first biography in Romance language of Islam's prophet. Morosini argues that in contrast to other medieval depictions of Mohammed, Du Pont presents Mohammed not as a necromancer but as distorted copy of a Christian knight, dangerous because he breaks the harmony of the chivalric world and because he is a traitor to its foundational values — generosity, loyalty to a lord, a woman, and God. Bronwen Wilson suggests that the popular portrait books featuring "Turks" in sixteenth-century Venetian print culture intersected with emerging practices of reading physiognomy as if it were a text to produce an ambivalent mirror of European and Venetian ideas about their own culture and society. Two sixteenth-century Jewish historians' work, analyzed in Fleming's contribution to *A Faithful Sea*, also used their histories of Ottoman ascendancy as a way of understanding their own position within the Mediterranean. Fleming argues that while for the Cretan rabbi Eliyahu Kapsali (c. 1490-1555) the rise of the Ottomans was a divinely ordained beginning to a new messianic age, the Salonican rabbi and writer Moshe Almisnino saw the Ottomans in more pragmatic terms, as a "temporal refuge for the ejected Jews of Iberia" (102). A small but important group of scholars are beginning to turn the mirror the other way and to examine Muslim views of Europeans, and Nabil Matar's article describing the seventeenth-century Maghribi accounts of Europeans and Christians in *Re-Orienting the Renaissance* is an example of this trend.[53]

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[51] MacLean, "Introduction," *Re-Orienting the Renaissance,* 2.
[52] *Mediterranoesis. Voci dal Medioevo e dal Rinascimento Mediterraneo*, ed. Roberta Morosini and Cristina Perissinotto (Rome: Salerno Editrice, 2007).
[53] Matar's scholarship, while primarily focused on exchanges between England and North Africa, has added a great deal to our understanding of Muslim views of Europeans. See his *Britain and Barbary, 1589-1689 and Turks, Moors, and Englishmen* for analysis; see also his edited collections of primary sources, *In the Lands of the Christians: Arabic Travel Writing in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

At issue in a second group of essays is the way the Mediterranean's intense connectivity led to the circulation of intellectual paradigms, narrative forms, and literary themes. Charmaine Lee's contribution to *Mediterraneanois* finds that Italian and Spanish versions of the King Arthur legend incorporate local elements, including a monstrous cat, Arthur's survival in Mount Etna, and Arthur riding the horned beast. Maria Bendinelli Predelli's contribution to the same volume compares the Hispano-Islamic author Ibn Hazm's treatise on love, "The Neck Ring of the Dove," to similar treatises from European courtly literature of twelfth and thirteenth centuries such as Capellanus and Dante. While Ibn Hazm's treatise was not a direct source for the later works, Predelli contends that the similarities between the texts are evidence of what she calls "interdiscursivity," meaning that there were communal notions circulating in the same cultural environment. Margaret Aziza Pappano's essay in *A Faithful Sea* unpacks the courtly and hagiographical roots of the legend of Saint Rosana, whose feast day was celebrated in fifteenth-century Florence with a confraternity-sponsored play. The plot, based in part on Boccaccio's *Il Filocolo*, has Rosana rescued from the Sultan of Babylon's harem by her childhood love Ulimentus; Pappano argues that the play's crusading rhetoric is tempered by more nuanced understandings of confessional identity, a tension that reflects Florentine ambivalence toward their Muslim neighbors.

A third group of essays examine literary reflections of the Mediterranean's particular social and geographic space. Corrado Corradini, in *Mediterraneanois,* examines the medieval literary trope of slippages in time — a moment which seems like years, or conversely, years which seem like mere moments. When the protagonist travels in another world, real or imaginary, his journey results in the irrevocable loss of his previous identity as well as ruptures in his sense of time. Stephen Murphy's contribution to the same volume examines literary representations of Mediterranean landscapes, and Perissinotto looks at the Mediterranean Utopia proposed by Francesco Patrizi da Cherso. The polyglot culture of Sicily is of particular interest to literary historians. Karla Mallette, both in her contribution to *A Faithful Sea* and in her monograph, analyzes the hybrid literary culture produced by an amalgam of Arabic, Latin, or Greek in Norman Sicily.[54] She argues that Frederick II's reign in the late twelfth century marked a transition to a Latinate literary culture and that Arabic, formerly an integral part of the island's tradition, was reformulated as "foreign." Mallette traces this shift through representations of the Muslim colony at Lucera, where Sicily's Muslims were relocated in 1223 and where their descendants were massacred in 1300. Bernardo Piciché's contribution to *Mediterraneanois* also focuses on the polyglot culture of Sicily, but in the sixteenth century, when Sicilian, Tuscan and Spanish co-existed, both on a daily level and in formal, literary culture. Piciché demonstrates that for Argisto Giuffredi' of Palermo, author of a number of treatises on the art of gracious living, control of these languages was an essential part of thinking, acting, and successfully maneuvering through the multiple levels of Sicilian society, something made more treacherous by the Spanish Inquisition's presence on the island.

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[54] Mallette's essay in *A Faithful Sea* focuses the slim literary representations in Italian literature of the Muslims of Lucera; her monograph, *The Kingdom of Sicily, 1100-1250. A Literary History.* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005) expands the analysis to literary culture in Norman Sicily as a whole and presents a number of the key texts in translation.

A Mediterranean Renaissance?

Finally, the traditional Renaissance study of politics and diplomacy has been invigorated by the inclusion of Ottoman and Muslim perspectives. Linda Darling has applied the concept of a "Renaissance" to Muslim cultures, arguing that Western Europe was not the only society to be revitalized by attention to a classical past.[55] She has also identified a body of political advice literature, written in the Middle East in the early sixteenth century, that treats issues of justice and legitimate rule. Darling compares this Arabic, Persian, and Turkish literature to the "mirror for princes" literature being produced contemporaneously in Italy, most famously by Niccolo Machiavelli. Darling does not argue for a direct transmission of ideas between these texts; rather, she suggests that Italian and Islamic rulers' comparable needs for texts that legitimated expanding states and centralizing bureaucracies led to comparable intellectual responses. "The specific recommendations of the Middle Eastern works," Darling states, "often differed from their European counterparts, but the similarity of issues that called them forth suggests that the region was undergoing a political transformation closely resembling the early modern transition in Europe" (509). While some scholars have pointed to the emergence of early forms of capitalism as essential to "modernity," a definition that effectively excludes much of the non-European world, Darling argues that the transformation of the state — the growth of centralizing, bureaucratic forms of administration — is an equally important marker of early modernity. Darling uses her comparison to question the Eurocentric views of progress and modernity that are often embedded within treatments of the Renaissance.

Daniel Goffman's point of comparison is diplomatic practice rather than political advice literature, but his broad conclusions echo Darling's.[56] Scholars of the Renaissance have long located the beginnings of a new and more sophisticated diplomacy in the fifteenth-century Italian city states. This new diplomacy, including the institution of resident ambassadors as representatives of sovereign states protected by the legal fiction of extraterritoriality, is seen as a significant stepping stone in the development of the modern state. Goffman accepts that this system filtered northward from fifteenth-century Italy, but argues that it was not developed in Italian city states existing in some sort of political vacuum. Rather, he situates the diplomatic innovations in Italian states' adaptations to the framework already in place for dealing with foreigners in the Islamic world. He connects the development of the European concept of extraterritoriality to the vocabulary and the legal traditions of Ottoman approaches to communities of non-Muslims and non-Ottomans resident in Ottoman-ruled lands. Goffman's work on diplomacy challenges thus the Eurocentric narrative of the "modern" state and also suggests that the significance of the encounter between East and West lies not in the opposition or contrast between difference, but in the necessary "accommodation with states and societies that the Italians, the French, the Dutch, and the English could not dominate or control" (360).

In a promising development for the future of the field, both Darling and Goffman's contributions appear in edited volumes on the history of the Renaissance. The inclusion of

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[55] Linda T. Darling, "The Renaissance and the Middle East," in *A Companion to the Worlds of the Renaissance*, ed. Guido Ruggiero, 55-69 (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002); idem, "Political Change and Political Discourse in the Early Modern Mediterranean World," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 38 (2008): 505-31.

[56] Daniel Goffman, "The Ottoman Empire," in *The Renaissance World*, ed. John Jeffries Martin, p. 347-63 (New York: Routledge, 2007); see also his *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

specialists on Ottoman history in these collections demonstrate the insights that can be gained from an increasing integration of scholarly networks, as well as an increasing attention to the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean. Future research should build on this development in order to ask more questions about the broad claims that have been made for Mediterranean difference. European specialists have already begun to ask if Mediterranean Europe is distinctly different from Northern Europe, and the same questions can be profitably posed for the Muslim Mediterranean. Are North Africa and the Middle East recognizably different from central Asian Islamic societies? Are the Ottomans different from the Safavids because they are a Mediterranean culture? More broadly comparative work will push scholars to identify the precise outcomes of cross-cultural exchange and to distinguish general and global patterns from more distinct local developments.

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