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THE MEDITERRANEAN AND ITS METAPHORS

Olivier Roy



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*The Mediterranean and its Metaphors*

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## **Abstract**

When referring to the Mediterranean sea, politicians, writers and religious leaders make frequent use of often contradictory metaphors: cradle of civilizations, and more precisely of the monotheist Abrahamic religion, bridge that crosses the water, rift opposing two different worlds. History also provides a lot of paradigms that are used metaphorically: Andalusia, Crusades, Jihad etc.

All these metaphors are framed under the paradigm of the clash/ dialogue of civilization, which supposes a permanent link between religion, culture, History and territory, finally embodied by the Westphalian state, but also by the late Ottoman empire, where religious minorities are put under the patronage of foreign powers and international treaties.

But these metaphors and historical paradigms are cut from their context and often based on distortion and ignorance of real History. More importantly they do not fit with the present patterns of mobility and deterritorialization around the Mediterranean sea: disconnect between religion and culture, multiple citizenships, demographic fluxes that are less and less identified with a labour migration to the West. The process of the European construction runs against the paradigm of the nation state and is more in tune with contemporary forms of mobility. Often mocked and despised, the evolutive and elusive European Union, where flexibility and bureaucracy make strange but already mature bed-fellows, could perfectly deal with our Mediterranean complexity. Instead of aping the nation-state or dreaming of past empires, Europe could look positively as its own incompleteness, a better tool to manage fluxes, de-territorialization and globalization.

## **Keywords**

Mediterranean sea, Europe, history, religion, civilization, Union for the Mediterranean





When the period of direct colonialism ended some fifty years ago, with the fiasco of the Suez expedition and with the independence of Cyprus and the Maghreb countries, the Mediterranean lost its importance for Europe and became a secondary front in the Cold War: the Israeli-Arab conflict was then seen both as a regional conflict and as part of a global confrontation between the West and the Soviet Union. However, it was not perceived to be of any real concern for Europe. European countries focused at that time on building a mostly inward looking European Union, while importing at the same time largely Muslim labour force which was not supposed to stay in the European Union.

However, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Mediterranean made a come-back as a strategic issue for the EU. The Madrid Conference and the Oslo Agreements featured the EU as a benevolent although largely impotent actor in the peace-process. The Barcelona Process inaugurated a search for a global cooperation between the EU and its Mediterranean neighbours which - with the exception of the former Yugoslavia and Israel - happened to be all Muslim and/or Arab countries. The polemic on the Turkish candidacy for the EU membership was exacerbated by the debate on the religious roots of the European culture, as illustrated by the controversy surrounding the preamble of a European Constitution. A sudden recognition that the labour immigration from the 1960s and 1970s had led to a permanent settlement of Muslim population in Europe contributed towards launching of the debate on integration, on compatibility of Islam and of European values, and on the strategic long-term impact of demographic shifts. These tensions were exacerbated by the terrorist attacks of 9/11 which triggered an on-going debate on the clash/ dialogue of civilizations.

What is the underlying rationale of the European interest for the other side of the Mediterranean? It is essentially a defensive and reactive one. The “other side”, despite all the official rhetoric, is seen more as a liability than an asset. More precisely, it is seen as a reservoir of negative fluxes: illegal immigration, terrorism, and virtual spill-over of the Middle Eastern conflicts, all leading – on the one hand – towards an intensification of sectarian and ethnic communal identities among large segments of the European population - mainly among the second generation Muslims and one part of the Jewish population, and on the other hand towards the appearance of xenophobic “white” movements.

## I.

The Mediterranean is now at the centre of the debate on the European identity. How does the political sphere express this debate?

Two approaches are possible: a confrontational and an integrative one.

The confrontational approach has been rejected by all European governments but more for pragmatic reasons than because of conviction (many conservative Catholics as well as many staunch secularists do think that Islam as such is not compatible with the European values, even if they among themselves sharply disagree on the definition of these values). The integrative approach has therefore become, either out of conviction or pragmatism, an official policy: there should be a process of dialogue, cooperation and agreement, eventually resulting in the building of institutions that would help fix the framework of cooperation with the Mediterranean neighbours of Europe, with European governments adopting at the same time a more assertive policy for integration of their Muslim population in order to avoid urban riots and Islamic radicalization.

However, as we shall see, the above-mentioned two approaches do share a same premise: that the Mediterranean is divided between two different cultures, each based on a specific religion (Christianity or Islam), a specific historical narrative and a specific territory. These two cultures extend or shrink at the expense of each other, with Religion, History and Geography being the nemeses of the Mediterranean dialogue.

In these conditions, the issue is how to promote a positive approach towards integration, when at the same time it is mostly the premises of the confrontation theory that are actually being shared? As

often is the case, rhetoric is employed to help hide contradictions, unuttered prejudices and inconsistencies. Yet the problem is that neither the use of metaphors and rhetorical figures of speech seems to be any more consistent, as it fosters the very prejudices it is supposed to help dismiss.

Official speeches, academic conferences, and newspaper articles carry a flood of expressions and metaphors, dotted with historical references recast as universal paradigms. How to make the Mediterranean something more than a large surface of water? A cradle, a bridge, a rift - metaphors start to flourish, and rhetoric replaces or hides the analysis. History also provides metaphoric paradigms which are cut off from their real environment, as for instance Al-Andalus.

The Mediterranean is called a cradle of civilizations, and more precisely of the monotheist Abrahamic religion. The *cradle* can thus turn into a *bridge* that crosses the water (maybe *crossing* is here an unpronounced statement of value, but “*mooning*” or “*starring*” will not help). But the Mediterranean lake may turn also into a *rift* across which two different worlds are opposed. We should thus *bridge* the *rift* to avoid confrontation. Yet, the metaphor of a peaceful bridge can also take a military turn: while bridges are connections, *bridgeheads* are threats (immigration, Turkey in Europe, Israel for the Arab world, etc.). How to build a bridge without bridgeheads?

History also provides a lot of paradigms that are used metaphorically. These historical metaphors are cut out of their respective contexts, and are often based on distortion and ignorance of real history and transformed into universal and anachronistic models in order to describe present situations or provide wishful-thinking solutions. This has not necessarily to do anything with acting in bad faith, because here again metaphors can be used to foster confrontation as well as cohabitation. But, bad or good, faith is a real issue.

Historical paradigms may substantiate the narrative of the confrontation: Roma versus Cartago, Islam versus Christianity, Europe versus the Ottoman Empire, and more recently, in the intellectual debate - crusades and Jihad, *dhimmi* and the “colonial subject”, Mont Saint Michel versus Cordoba etc. It is a story of conquest, crusades, battles (Poitiers; Granada; Lepanto; Siege of Vienna), controversies (*disputatio* as the one mentioned by the Pope in his famous discourse of Regensburg in September 2006), piracy, slavery, and colonial expeditions from Egypt to Algeria. Borders are mobile but always oppose a “we” and an “other”: the moving line of castles in Castile, the coastal cities of the Maghreb versus the Hinterland, and the “bled” modern enclaves (Ceuta; West Bank settlements), various walls and fences (from Melilla and Cyprus to the Israeli green line), not to mention the destitute neighbourhoods in French suburbs or in British inner cities. In this perspective whole populations change status according to some variations of borders and regimes: they may leave more or less voluntarily and experience the degradation of becoming refugees (Muslims leaving Andalusia for Morocco or the Balkans for Turkey; “Pieds-Noirs” leaving Algeria for France; Palestinians), they may be expelled (Moriscos and Jews, even when converted, from Catholic Spain), or be subjugated (either by a forced conversion or by being turned into a lower status minority), or they may end as part of a new modern under-class.

But another set of historical paradigms is called more and more often to substantiate the narrative of the peaceful cohabitation and fruitful dialogue between civilizations. Al Andalus is certainly a favourite paradigm, where the “three religions” were not only cohabiting at times but enriching each other. In this category we find also the kingdom of Sicilia under the German emperor Frederic II (12th century) or the Ottoman Empire after the reforms in 19th century. “Towards a new Andalusia” is a frequent motto to advocate new forms of cohabitation, including multi-culturalism, among others. And here and there in Europe we see the burgeoning of associations called *Avicenna* or *Averroes*, exhibitions extolling the Islamic legacy in the European culture, books praising figures that crossed the cultural divide (Leo Africanus, Emir Abdel Qader, Louis Massignon). As if the two models were Castile versus Andalusia, fences versus bridges, dialogue versus battle. Constantinople, Tangier, Alexandria, Thessalonica, today Marseille and sometimes Haifa (all being sea-ports) are often praised as successful cosmopolitan cities embodying the spirit of the perennial Mediterranean. “Métissage”

which badly translates into English is celebrated through music festivals, fashion events, cooking books, movies, and novels.

Due to the fact that few lasting political entities did embody such a co-habitation, culture is called upon to illustrate the richness of civil societies versus those run by narrow-minded political and religious leaders. It is fashionable nowadays to praise the flexibility of empires at the expense of the narrow-mindedness of nation-states. The underlying idea is that societies around the Mediterranean were more open and tolerant than their rulers, which may be true but says little about what should be the policies of our present governments.

The Mediterranean is thus represented as a civilization in itself, which imposes its perennial identity on the local populations and fluctuant political entities. The Mediterranean thus becomes a pole, a hub, an organic entity. It is a metaphor in itself, embodied in the concept of "The Mediterranean according to Braudel". Such a metaphor is making an interesting come-back with the concept of the Union for the Mediterranean. But what is this Mediterranean entity?

Etymology provides useful figures of speech. The Mediterranean is in the middle of something: *Medium, Middle, Mittel, motawasset*. This something is a "we": it is our sea, "*mare nostrum*". We are all Mediterranean people because we live more or less close to the sea. But who are those "we" apart from a purely geographical definition? In fact the "we" has almost always been defined first by a political power, even if it survived the decline and fall of this power. The "we" doesn't share: the Roman Empire subjected or destroyed its rivals (Cartago). By the way, the destruction of Cartago is certainly not a good omen for the synthesis between the East and the West, i.e., between the Semitic and Hellenic legacies.

However, civilizations appeared in turn to be more sustainable than empires: when empires collapsed, the civilization they had fostered survived and prospered. Empires became some sort of fathering ghosts. That's true for both the Roman Empire and the Umayyad Arab Caliphate. When Fernand Braudel wrote about the unity of the Mediterranean, he clearly conceived it as a Latin entity: Islam belonged to the Hinterland, the desert, the *bled*, and the Muslims who came to settle into Southern Mediterranean coastal cities joined, according to Braudel, a *de facto* Latin civilization. "We", for Braudel, were clearly Christians and not Muslims: the model was assimilationist, not multiculturalist.

"Mare nostrum" was not just a European view. For many Arab scholars of the past, the "mare nostrum" is the *dar ul islam*, and an early debate arose among scholars concerning the fate of the Muslim minorities left behind after the reflux of Muslim political control (from Sicily in 16<sup>th</sup> century to Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1907).

In both cases, the "others" when staying in "our midst" were defined as a minority which should either be expelled (Spain after the reconquista) or granted a specific status, but more as a tolerated minority than as full citizens (that was the case with the Arab caliphates and the Ottoman empire, but also with the western colonial powers when they defined a dual status system for the residents of their colonies: the "Europeans" and the assimilated on the one hand, and the "indigenous people" on the other hand). Inclusion meant toleration, not full integration. The "others" were seen as an extension or a bridgehead of the "other" civilization: the capitulations agreements between France and the Sublime Gate put the Middle Eastern Christians under the patronage of the Christian states, and thus transformed them, more or less wittingly, into some sort of an extension of the West. Similarly, Muslims in Europe are often seen as a physical extension of Muslim countries (which for instance may turn around the "capitulations" system, by maintaining close ties with - if not control of - the Muslim communities in the West through consulates, religious institutions and migrants' associations). In a word, "we" refers always to a political and territorial domination, even if other groups could be tolerated and even protected. This territorial vision entails of course a specific geo-strategic conception. To be more precise, the problem of geo-strategy as a discipline is that it is linked to a

purely territorial perception of the world, as a mere set of flat maps. Geo-strategy is a science of the past, the science of “flatitude” and has little to say about dynamics and mobilities.

The status of minorities around the Mediterranean after 16th century became more an issue of foreign policy resulting in bilateral treaties than a purely domestic one: minorities were protected precisely to the extent in which they were seen as “foreign”; their fate was defined by the international treaties (for instance in France protestants that were protected by the respective treaties of Munster, 1624, and Westphalia, 1648, were not forced to convert or flee after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685; similarly the Treaty of Lausanne, 1923, protected religious minorities of the **new Turkey**). The link between freedom of religion and international law may have meant a step towards tolerance, but it has a lingering unattended consequence: that of religious minorities being perceived as foreign-sponsored groups.

The debate on the Mediterranean is obviously a way to define Europe, but more negatively than positively. If the Mediterranean is a border or a rift, then Europe is whatever is left on the Northern edge of this frontier, its gravity centre being more on the Rhine/ Po axis and corresponding to the former kingdom of Lotharingia. Alternatively, if the Mediterranean is at the centre, then Northern Europe is rejected as the fringe. This is precisely what was at stake in the project of the “Union for the Mediterranean”, which was first labelled as the “Union of the Mediterranean”. In fact, instead of being perceived as appearing suddenly, out of the blue, this project is rooted in a less known historical paradigm: that of an alliance between the Catholic and Latin countries with the Muslim Arabs, in order to counterbalance a protestant Anglo-Saxon hegemony. Such a “Mare nostrum” concept was activated in 19th century mainly by French officials of the Second Empire: the European settlements in Algeria and the institution of the Catholic church in North Africa (later followed by the carving out of the Christian Lebanon from Syria by the French) went along with the declaration of Napoleon III that he was ruling both the French empire and the Arab kingdom. Catholic Christianity, allied with a declining Arab and Muslim civilization, was seen as a bulwark against the coming hegemony of a dynamic Anglo-Saxon protestant world: let us not forget that at the same time when Napoleon III re-activated the concept of the Christian “mare nostrum”, he launched a religious campaign in Mexico, dreaming of a world of the Catholic Latin coalition that could thwart the US expansion. But even if some advisers of Napoleon III dreamt of a Franco-Arab axis, it turned out to be nothing more than an extension of western civilization to new populations: during 19th century, Islam was no more seen as a threat by the West but as a declining and decaying civilization: inter-European competition was one of the keys of the colonial expeditions. Should we consider that the same idea is back? The famous “politique arabe de la France” bears something of that dream, although De Gaulle granted independence to Algeria precisely because he did not believe in a “Franco-Arab” synthesis, which would have been the inevitable consequence of opening full citizenship option for the “indigènes”.

The divide between Europe and Middle East may hide other fault-lines. It is not very far-fetched to see in the project of the Union for the Mediterranean an avatar of this anti-Anglo-Saxon alignment, and it has obviously been understood as such by Germany. Henri Guaino, a close adviser of president Sarkozy, is well known for his “souverainist”, anti-Brussels, neo-gaullist positions. This is a good example of an historical fantasy turned into a political driver by the power of speech, but doomed to remain little more than a rhetorical ghost, genuinely produced by a ghost-writer.

## II.

As I have already said, all these historical paradigms do not refer an accurate description of what the Mediterranean is or has been. They are called to dispel the anxiety generated by new trends and tectonic changes and to provide some wishful thinking options. These historical paradigms look familiar, but they have been reconstructed and isolated from their broader context.

In fact the two paradigms of integration and confrontation are poor tools of explanation: they could be deconstructed to show how the past was more complex. On the one hand, tolerance and dialogue have never been a driving force throughout history. When cohabitation did happen, it was not based on brotherhood and equality, but was instead framed along hierarchical models: the dominant paradigm was that of *cujus regio ejus religio*, that is the equation between territory, power and religion. Minorities could possibly exist, more easily in the Muslim territories, but they were rather just tolerated than recognized as a permanent and legitimate presence.

On the other hand, there has almost never been such a thing as a popular and massive mobilization of two civilizations rallying under their religious banners to fight each other. The Muslim conquest did not meet a “Christian” resistance (many Christians did welcome it), and the Crusades did not meet an Islamic counter-Jihad. And, whatever the discourse of confrontation, there have always been accommodations, negotiations and reverse alliances, which are called in retrospect treason, cowardice and defeatism, because they are constructed from the point of view of the clash of civilizations. During the Crusades, when the Holy Seat had undoubtedly a confrontational approach, the concrete attitudes of many crusaders as well as Muslim rulers were far more ambiguous. Ibn Taymiyya, perceived in retrospect as the harbinger of modern radical Islam, castigated the local Muslim rulers for not having been concerned by the fall of Jerusalem in the hands of the crusaders: as he noted, the famous Muslim theologian, Ghazali, who was at that time commuting from Baghdad to Damascus, never mentioned Jihad or even the Crusaders in his works.

Likewise, the kingdom of France, although dubbed “Church’s elder daughter” maintained a privileged relationship with the Ottoman Empire, while many other Catholic countries were fighting it. I remember, in a conference in 2003, hearing Professor Bernard Lewis explaining the French refusal to join the US led coalition against Saddam Hussein by a historical paradigm: from François 1<sup>st</sup> to De Gaulle the French have always chosen a Muslim reverse alliance against their Western Christian cousins: the proof is their conspicuous respective absence from the battle of Lepanto (1571), and from the battle of Baghdad (2003). But what if a compromise were the norm and a confrontation the exception? After all, European countries fought far more wars against each other than against Muslim countries. And when general Lyautey said “a war between France and Germany is a civil war”, he was not a man of his time.

It is clear that the reading of these events as a proof of the clash of civilizations is largely a construction. Were Ghazali and François 1<sup>st</sup> cowards and traitors or, on the contrary, were they more “modern” than the way they have been presented by the partisans of the ‘clash of civilizations’ approach? In the battle of Lepanto, the French monarch, castigated for not joining the Christian coalition, had probably a more modern view than the old narrative of the Crusades: that of the interest of the state; he viewed the Ottoman Empire as a political power, not as an alternative civilisational or religious model. The modernity of the nation-state made Crusades obsolete.

But “modernity” in this sense is not necessarily more “tolerant”. The same French monarch that ignored the call for the crusade of Lepanto did preside over the Saint Bartholomew massacre of the Protestants one year after (1572). Suppressing the Protestants inside France and allying with Protestant or Muslim forces against fellow Latin Catholics indicate the emergence of a new model: the Nation/State, but not the emergence of a paradigm of “multi-culturalism” or tolerance for religious minorities.

The irenic “Andalus” model is of little use to fix a new set of rules for trans-Mediterranean cooperation: it was more the result of a balance of power than of the rise of a new paradigm of inter-confessional relationships.

In fact, a strict connection between a religion and a territory was certainly a major component in the emergence of the modern state, but not a characteristic of the “empires” which have ruled huge territories around the Mediterranean. In a word, one of the two main concepts at the basis of the theory of the clash/ dialogue of civilizations (the correspondence between a religion and a territory, the other

being the bond between religion and culture) is more a consequence of the emergence of the modern nation-state than a legacy of the last fifteen centuries. And it would not be very difficult to show that the growing autonomy of the secular power from the influence of the church led often to a more restrictive policy in favour of religious homogeneity (from Gallicanism to “laïcité”, from Suleiman to Ataturk). For instance Philippe 4th of France attacked the Pope in Italy and expelled the Jews from France at the same time and, I would add, in the same move (primacy of the State); while the Papacy had usually showed a more tolerant attitude towards Jewish communities settled in its territory.

*Cujus regio, ejus religio* (the people should be of the same religion as the ruler) was a tool of homogenization of the nation/ state. Of course these nation-states had to deal with the fact that they were not homogenous. But when religious minorities were accepted it has been for a long period under the concept of “tolerance”, not of full citizenship (see for instance the “toleration edicts” towards the other Christian minorities: France 1787; Great Britain 1829; Spain in 1968). It took the European states a long time to shift from toleration to citizenship as far as religious minorities were concerned (and for the Ottoman empire to abolish the dhimmi status). However, the association between religious minorities and a “foreign” influence remains strong in the political imaginary (and it is not confined to Muslim minorities in Europe, or Christian minorities in the Middle East: evangelical Protestantism is often decried as a tool of the US influence). We have seen how this association has been re-enforced by the use of the international law to protect religious and national minorities.

The endeavour to territorialize religion has more to do here with the history of the modern State, than with the birth and the extension of different civilisational models. But this territorialisation has become now one of the main premises of the paradigm of the clash/dialogue of civilizations. It has been cast as a myth of origin, when civilizations, in a typical 19th century view, grow and develop as some sort of organic entities. But such an interpretation leaves out the legal and political dynamics of state constructions.

### III.

In fact the success of metaphors and historical paradigms does not come from their geographical or historical accuracy but from their ability to express a certain continuity of perception, which is nevertheless put into question by the construction of Europe. The perception in question is that the close connection between territory, religion and culture is still at work. Europe is using, in order to understand itself, intellectual tools that have nothing to do with its own construction.

These tools have taken the forms of two models of policy, both of them officially aiming at insuring the integration of the second generation of Muslim migrants: one is the mostly French assimilationist model, and the other one is the Northern European “multi-culturalist” model. Although apparently in total contradiction, they in fact share the same premise - that there is a permanent connection between religion and culture. In the assimilationist model, new citizens should join a new national secular political culture, and thus have to give up their faith or to keep it private: to join a new culture means to join a new definition of religion and embrace secularism that has explicitly been constructed against religion (laïcité). In the multiculturalist model, “religion” is perceived as being permanently linked with a pristine culture and thus both terms (religion and culture) are used as almost synonymous: “Muslim” tends to be used as a neo-ethnic term and not as a reference to an individual faith (hence the head-lines on the “Muslim riots” in France suburbs). I will argue that both models are in fact modern transcriptions of the old principle “*cujus regio-ejus religio*”.

For the French model, assimilation is conditioned by a prerequisite: secularization. In a word, there could be integration only if religion is restricted to the private sphere. Laïcité is more or less expressed as the official “religion”: instead of being cast merely in terms of neutrality (which is both the letter and the spirit of the Law) it is too often presented as a system of positive values which supersedes religions. Assimilation here has something to do with the process of conversion, and the State may

have the right to check the conformity with the model (see for instance the decision of the Conseil d'Etat to confirm the denial of citizenship to a burqa-wearing Moroccan woman). Hence laïcité appears more as a state ideology, or at least as a national political culture, than as just a set of rules of the game. It is implicitly cast as some sort of an "official" religion. I don't want to make a too far-fetched comparison, but it has something to do with the forced conversions imposed on new subjects (Spain after Granada).

As for the multi-culturalist model, on the other hand, the second generation of immigrants should be allowed, and even encouraged, to stick with their pristine culture: that of their country of origin. However, the group is defined as a "minority", with religious and ethnic patterns lumped together. Multi-culturalism is not "Métissage" because it does not suppose a synthesis, a quest for a higher identity that could subsume pristine identities, beyond the purely legal definition of citizenship. The model which makes a come-back here is the Ottoman model of the millet: it is quite logical to hear proposals to integrate some part of the sharia into a personal status code that could be managed through religious courts of arbitration (as the Archbishop of Canterbury proposed last year). Moreover, to use a religious criterion to define the minority means that, symmetrically, the dominant group is also defined by its religion, even if it is a secularized form of that religion. We are still in the "cujus regio ejus religio". It is not by chance that Prime Minister Tony Blair waited to leave Downing Street before announcing his conversion to Catholicism.

In this sense the policy of the European states is a policy of re-territorialisation: instead of acknowledging contemporary forms of mobility (religious, ethnic, geographic or even occupational mobility) it aims to territorialize the second generation of migrants, either by assimilating them or by granting them a minority status, as well as to re-territorialize the population of the Southern shores of the Mediterranean by preventing them to move towards the north. This has been a thread-line since the launching of the Barcelona process. To sum up, it is the following factors that are at play in the European state policy:

- preventing new migrations by developing the southern Mediterranean edge
- integrating Muslims settled in Europe through a policy of some sort of affirmative action
- defusing political radicalism by fostering peace between Israel and the Palestinians (which means that European Muslims are still perceived as constructing their political identity as foreign Middle Eastern actors)
- preventing religious radicalization through a "dialogue with Islam", which too often means negotiating with the ruling regimes from the Middle East. This is tantamount if one wants to put in place a policy of reciprocal capitulations: Europeans are supposed to protect Middle Eastern Christian minorities (they have failed, but feel guilty; see, for instance, the debate on the Armenian genocide), while Muslim states speak in the name of a supposed Muslim Diaspora in Europe (as some Arab countries tried to do during the Danish cartoons affair).The paradigm of the late Ottoman "*millet*" is back or, more precisely, it has never ceased to be at the core of the definition of a trans-Mediterranean peaceful co-existence.

The whole approach to the Mediterranean is still based on geo-strategic consideration of security, more than on the acknowledgement of an in-depth tectonic change.

#### IV.

What is the problem with these models? My point here is not to advocate for an idealist new model. The problem is that these paradigms simply don't work. Main trends that are at work around the Mediterranean ask for new models of understanding.

I will here sum-up main reasons why the old paradigms don't work:

1. Religions are more and more disconnected from the cultures in which they have been embedded. Immigration and secularization have separated cultural and religious markers. Many Muslims consider nowadays that religious norms (for instance hallal food) could be applied in a western cultural context (hallal fast-food). Veil wearing is expressed more in terms of personal choice and freedom than as a wish to perpetuate a traditional culture. Fundamentalisms are both consequences and factors of deculturation: they shun off and even fight traditional cultures in which they have been embedded, seeing them more often as pagan than profane.
2. To identify a religion with an ethnic culture is to ascribe to each believer a culture and/or an ethnic identity that he or she does not necessarily feel comfortable with. Conversely, it supposes that any member of an ethnic community belongs to a faith, while he or she may in fact reject it or just ignore it. To identify a religion or a culture runs against true religious freedom, which supposes also the right not to believe, as well as the right to change confessional affiliation. Multi-culturalist model has a problem to understand conversions at the time when the issue of apostasy is becoming a cornerstone of the Europeanization of Islam. Religions express themselves more and more as "faith communities" instead of established churches or ethno-national groups (with the exception of the Christian Eastern orthodoxies). It is not by chance that traditional Middle-Eastern Christian churches, embedded in the centuries old cultures, are slowly disappearing, while protestant evangelicalism is making a breakthrough in Muslim societies, both in North Africa and among Muslim immigrants. Symmetrically, Islamic fundamentalist movements in Europe (including the radical ones) are full of converts. The culturally embedded religions are in crisis: the Catholic Church, the traditional forms of Islam, liberal Lutheran Protestantism, Christian orthodoxies, as well as Eastern Christian churches. They are challenged by evangelicalism, salafisme, or neo-Sufism.
3. To identify religion and culture means also to identify European Muslim citizens as a "Middle Eastern Diaspora", and thus to import the Middle Eastern conflicts into the European space, precisely at the time when this import is defined as a source of potential tensions. I have no time here to deal with that problem, but clearly the **supposed** identification of the second generation of Muslims to the Palestinians *as a consequence of* watching Al-Jazeera in Arabic has been largely exaggerated (no youngster who participated in the 2005 riots in France did wave a Palestinian flag, and if Al-Jazeera decided to create a channel in English, it is precisely because few European Muslims are able to watch it in Arabic; by the way, the English channel is **far** more moderate precisely because it targets a non-Middle Eastern audience).

Instead of trying to pursue an elusive multi-culturalism or to impose an assimilation based on the wrong perception of its "common values", Europe should stick to its principles:

- To deal with religions as "mere" religions, not as the expressions of cultures or ethnic groups. To recognize the faith communities on the basis of an individual and free choice, and to promote freedom of religion by treating equally all religions and only as religions.
- Ethno-linguistic minorities should not be mixed up with faith communities. Both exist in the EU, but each group should be dealt with through different legal paradigms: freedom of religion is not same as minority rights; although these two could of course overlap (this is why, for instance, I am not happy with the term "islamophobia"). A faith is a choice, while a racial or ethnic identity is, at least in the beginning, a given fact or a label bestowed from the



outside. Mixing up these two does jeopardize the way citizenship and personal freedom have been constructed as the basic principles of political life.

Another and last point is that the paradigms I am criticizing don't reflect the new patterns of mobility and settlements around the Mediterranean. The bulk of migration is coming from beyond the Mediterranean. We are no more at the time of a massive labour migration stemming from the Mediterranean countries. Fluxes are more fluid, and circulation goes also in both directions: elderly Europeans are settling in Tunisia and Turkey for retirement, and the jet-set has its fashionable quarters in Morocco. Many second generation graduates or entrepreneurs are looking for job opportunities or are investing in business and companies which have precisely found an opportunity in playing on trans-Mediterranean joint-ventures (real-estate, travel agencies, import-export, medical activities, education, holidays resorts etc.). An increasing number of people with dual citizenship make these new patterns of circulation easier. Informal or grey economy is also by definition playing on the transnational networks which go far beyond family ties and "ethnic business".

Migration from the Mediterranean areas is more flexible, temporary and reversible (I am not referring here to the new migration coming from China, Iraq, Afghanistan or sub-Saharan Africa). In fact, we should speak more of labour mobility or even of professional mobility than of labour migration: some educated young Moroccans could have a French passport, take a job in London, then go back to Morocco to open a business, or fly to Abu-Dhabi. However, it seems that governments are trying to fix the population: visa restrictions force people to move less, but also to stay - illegally or legally - once they are in the West, while they could move in an easier way if they felt more secure about their administrative status. The social status of many second-generation migrants has improved and is slowly changing the marriage patterns. The old pattern (marrying a cousin from the bled in order to bring new family members into Europe) is not dead but is increasingly replaced by a mobility of young graduates or young entrepreneurs. However, students and relatives are treated too often as potential immigrants. For example, the fact that a country like Turkey does not export almost any labour power any more is not taken into consideration. The process of territorialisation has been unable to stop illegal migrations while thwarting many a positive dynamics for a mutual development. However, once again this endeavour to territorialize the populations is a legacy of the territorialist nation-state.

The process of the European construction runs against the paradigm of the nation state and is more in tune with contemporary forms of mobility. Often mocked and despised, the evolutive and elusive European Union, where flexibility and bureaucracy make strange but already mature bed-fellows, could perfectly deal with our Mediterranean complexity. Instead of aping the nation-state or dreaming of past empires, Europe could look positively at its own incompleteness, as a better tool to manage fluxes, de-territorialization and globalization. Europe has inaugurated a new relationship with territorialisation: there are different levels (the 27's; Schengen; Euro-zone) and a virtual permanent expansion, thanks to its inability to define a real border. As we have seen, this does not mean an open-space: borders have too often been replaced by the internal fences, walls and ghettos, but at least there is a juxtaposition of different spaces.

Europe is a self-defining process with no ideological, cultural or religious pre-requisite: and this is the good news! The debate on the European values has been vitiated from the beginning: there could be no definition of European values except in terms of a formal legal system (freedom, democracy, state of law). If we try to define positive values and a European culture, we have three choices: a Kulturkampf against the Catholic Church (joined by some others), a come-back to a "Christian Europe" with norms in place of spirituality, or a resettling of the Vatican somewhere between Jerusalem and Mecca (but that's still the Mediterranean!). We have no other choice but to accept pluralism.

**In conclusion**, we should not try too much to define what the Mediterranean is, what it means or what it should be. It is not a lake; it is an open sea - just to prove that we cannot get rid of metaphors. If it is open, then we have to be careful with the notion of “Middle”, because it supposes a circumference, a closed circle. Let’s open the circle.

In Turkish, there exists another way to call the Mediterranean: Ak Deniz, white sea, as opposed to Kara Deniz, black sea – ‘white’ standing for the white sand, and ‘black’ for the black sand. In the Turkic languages, the opposition couple white and black is more classificatory than descriptive. And I remember that, when travelling through Central Asia, every time I would leave the remnants of a walled old town to confront the open space, I would find a sign-post with the inscription “Ak Yol!”, “White road!” It means in fact “Have a safe trip!” So let’s speak of Ak Deniz, the White Sea, for the sake of “having a safe sail!”

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