happens that in the course of their slow process these movements gradually change direction. One may find periods of construction and deterioration alternating indefinitely. A mountain region for instance may achieve prosperity, only to lose it all or lose itself in its own success. When this history is not confined to mere accident or local progress, it appears that these extremely slow-moving 'geographical' cycles, if one may use the term, obey a very rough synchronism. So as the sixteenth century comes to an end, we find an explosion of liberation from the Mediterranean mountains which were in all cases overpopulated and subject to strain. The diffuse war which results is swallowed up in the interminable masked social warfare known as banditry – an ill-defined word if ever there was one. From the Alps to the Pyrenees, the Apennines or any other mountains, Moslem or Christian, a common destiny seems to emerge along these long mountain chains separated by the sea.

In this almost motionless framework, these slow-furling waves do not act in isolation; these variations of the general relations between man and his environment combine with other fluctuations, the sometimes lasting but usually short-term movements of the economy. All these movements are superimposed on one another. They all govern the life of man, which is never simple. And man cannot build without founding his actions, consciously or not, on their ebb and flow. In other words, geographical observation of long-term movements guides us towards history's slowest processes. Consciousness of this has directed our observation both in this and in following chapters.

CHAPTER II

The Heart of the Mediterranean: Seas and Coasts

Let us now leave the mainland and turn to the sea. Our journey will take us in turn to the different stretches of water within the Mediterranean, to the coastal strips, and to the islands. Our progress will be guided by these geographical units, but again our chief concern will be to select for analysis and comparison identical elements within them and by so doing to make the units themselves more intelligible.

I. THE PLAINS OF THE SEA

We shall of course have to measure these expanses of water in relation to human activity; their history would otherwise be incomprehensible if indeed it could be written at all.

Coastal navigation. The sea in the sixteenth century was an immensity of water: man's efforts had only conquered a few coastal margins, direct routes, and tiny ports of call. Great stretches of the sea were as empty as the Sahara. Shipping was active only along the coastline. Navigation in those days was a matter of following the shore line, just as in the earliest days of water transport, moving crab-wise from rock to rock,[1] 'from promontories to islands and from islands to promontories'.[2] This was *costeggiare*,[3] avoiding the open sea – what Pierre Belon calls 'les campagnes de mer', 'the fields of the sea'. More precisely, according to the galley accounts of a Ragusan vessel,[4] it was a matter of buying one's butter

[1] Éric de Bisschop, *Au delà des horizons lointains*, I, Paris, 1939, p. 344. To quote Cervantes: '*navegando de tierra a tierra con intencion de no engolfarnos*', *Novelas ejemplares*. This was a voyage from Genoa to Spain.

[2] Peter Martyr to the Count of Tendilla and the Archbishop of Granada, Alexandria in Egypt, 8th January, 1502, letter no. 231, re-edited by Luis Garcia y Garcia, *Una embajada de los Reyes Católicos a Egipto*, 1947, p. 55, note.

[3] *Costeggiare*, to hug the shore, also means to go carefully: the Doge of Venice advises the Duke of Ferrara to go *costegiando*, A.d.S., Modena, Venezia 77 IX, f° 43, J. Tebaldi to the Duke, Venice, 29th April, 1526. The opposite, to go straight ahead, is *s'engoulfer*, to plunge in, to go *a camin francese*. The Captain General of the Sea, Tommaso Contarini, writes from Corfu, 10th July, 1558 '. . . . *La notte, si comme le scrissi, levatomi me ne venni qui a camin francese, senza tochar alcun loco . . .*'. A.d.S. Venice, Provveditori da Terra e da Mar, 1078. Another expression but less precise is *venire de lungo*. A.d.S. Venice Senato Mar. 19, f° 34, 28th December, 1517, grain ships, loaded at Cyprus . . . '*sono venute de longo a Venetia senza tocar Corphù*'. cf. the Spanish expression *a largo mar*, *CODOIN*, LV, p. 8 (1628).

[4] Archives, Ragusa, exact reference mislaid. See Bertrand de la Borderie, *Le Discours du Voyage de Constantinople*, Lyons, 1542, p. 6; Pierre Belon (*op. cit.*, p. 85) passed

at Villefranche, vinegar at Nice, oil and bacon at Toulon. Or as a Portuguese chronicler puts it, of travelling from one seaside inn to another, dining in one and supping in the next.[5] Thomé Cano, the Sevilian, said of the Italians, 'They are not sailors of the high seas.'[6] Sailing in the Adriatic, Pierre Lescalopier was 'amusing himself watching the mummers' on Mardi Gras in 1574 at Zara; two days later, on February 25th, he passed in front of St. John of Malvasia and dined on the 26th at Spalato.[7] This is how the princes and notables of this world would have travelled, from one coastal town to the next, taking time for festivities, visits, receptions, or rest while the crew was loading the boat or waiting for better weather.[8] This is how even the fighting fleets travelled, doing battle only in sight of land.[9] The word that springs to mind as one studies the itineraries or *Arti di navigare* of the period, which are from beginning to end a description of the coastal route, is the humble word 'tramping'.

On exceptional occasions the ship might lose sight of the coast, if she was blown off course; or if she embarked on one of the three or four direct routes that had long been known and used. She might be going from Spain to Italy by the Balearics and the south of Sardinia, which was often called 'sailing by the islands'. Or from the straits of Messina or Malta, she might be aiming for Syria, by way of Cape Matapan and the coasts of Crete and Cyprus.[10] Or she might take the direct route from Rhodes to Alexandria in Egypt, a swift crossing with a favourable wind[11] and one which was undertaken in the Hellenic period. In 1550 Pierre Belon went 'straight through' from Rhodes to Alexandria. But these could hardly be

so close to Magnesia Point, 'that we might have thrown a stone from our ship on to the land'. On ships unable to leave the coast, *Saco de Gibraltar*, p. 134–136.

[5] J. de Barros, *Da Asia, Dec.*, I, book IV, ch. XI, (edited A. Baião, p. 160): '*jantando em un porto e ceando em outro*'.

[6] Damião Peres, *História de Portugal*, 1928–1933, IV, p. 214; Thomé Cano, *Arte para fabricar . . . naos de guerra y merchante . . .* Seville, 1611, p. 5 v°. Escalante de Mendoza, 1575, distinguishes between the '*marineros de costa y derrota y otros de alta mar*'. Neither those who sail from Biscay to France, nor those who sail 'to all the Levant' count as sailors of the high seas; Henri Lapeyre, *Une famille de marchands: les Ruiz*, 1955, p. 194.

[7] *Op. cit.*, p. 25.

[8] Cf. the voyage made by the Archdukes Rudolph and Ernest (E. Mayer-Loewenschwerdt, *Der Aufenthalt der Erzherzöge R. und E. in Spanien, 1564–1571*, Vienna, 1927) or that made by Cardinal Camillo Borghese (A. Morel Fatio, *L'Espagne au XVIe et au XVIIe siècle*, 1878, p. 160–169) who in 1594 called at Leghorn, Savona, Palamos, Barcelona, '*costegiando la riviera de Catalogna*'. Marie de Medici took twenty-two days to get from Leghorn to Marseilles, 13th October–3rd November, 1600, Agrippa d'Aubigné, *Histoire universelle*, ed. for *Société de l'Histoire de France* by A. de Ruble, 1886–1897, IX, p. 338–339.

[9] La Prevesa, Lepanto . . . but also La Hougue, Aboukir, Trafalgar. Is it only in our own time that wars are lost in mid-ocean? R. La Bruyère, *Le drame du Pacifique*, 1943, p. 160.

[10] Paul Masson, *Histoire du commerce français dans le Levant au XVIIe siècle*, 1896, p. 487–488. It is the old Marseilles route, but with the difference that in the thirteenth century, only a small number of vessels reached Syria from Messina without putting in there on the way.

[11] Belon, *op. cit.*, p. 81 v° ff.

called authentic high sea routes. Ships were not really taking to the open sea when they sailed from one island to another, seeking shelter from the north wind on the east–west passage; or taking advantage on the north–south passage, on the Rhodes–Alexandria crossing which is after all quite short, of the wind which in one season blew from the north and in the other from the south. The venture might be repeated on shorter trips, crossing from one side of a bay to the other. But in January 1571, when a Venetian galleon, *Foscarini e Panighetto*, coming from Candia, ran into fog on the other side of Corfu and was obliged to advance blind with no land in sight, the crew was seized with despair[12].

The importance of the shore was such that the coastal route was scarcely different from a river. The owner of land on the coast might exact toll from all passing boats, which might be justified if the sum corresponded to a real service in the port. But this was not the case when the Dukes of Monaco and Savoy, both owners of an absurdly small portion of the coastline and most anxious therefore to have a share in the rich traffic passing under their noses, claimed the right to collect payment from all ships for the mere privilege of sailing past their land. Woe betide any sailing ship stopped by their galleys.[13] The 2 per cent duty at Villefranche, as a result of French bad temper, almost turned into a diplomatic incident under Louis XIV. Nothing shows better than this the extent to which shipping was tied to the coast. The possession after the treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis of the *presidios* of Talamona, Orbetello, Porto-Ercole, and S. Stefano on the Tuscan coast, made it possible for Philip II to interrupt shipping between Genoa and Naples at will.[14] The role played by La Goletta on the

[12] Ugo Tucci, 'Sur la pratique vénitienne de la navigation au XVIe siècle' in *Annales E.S.C.*, 1958, p. 72–86.

[13] Simancas E° 1392, Figueroa to the king, Genoa, 30th April, 1563; the Duke of Monaco stopped three *escorchapines* coming from Tortosa laden with wool, because they had not paid the passage dues. The merchandise was intended for Spanish merchants in Florence. The Duke claimed that his privilege had been confirmed by Charles V. A.d.S. Genova, L. M. Spagna, 10–2419: a Savoyard galley in October, 1588, captured boats carrying oil, actually off the Genoese riviera, a mile from land, because they had not paid the Villefranche duty. On the Villefranche duty which goes back to 1538, see Paul Masson, *Histoire du commerce français dans le Levant au XVIIe siècle*, 1896, p. 72–73, and *Histoire du commerce français dans le Levant au XVIIIe siècle*, 1911, p. 192–193: *C.S.P.* VII, p. 229, 25th June, 1560; A. N., Marine B 31; Genoa, Manoscritti no. 63, 1593; A.d.S. Florence, Mediceo 2842, 11th August, 1593; A.N., Foreign Affairs Bl, 511, Genoa, 17th June, 1670; *Lettres de Henri IV*, VI, p. 126.

[14] The possession of Piombino alone (an independent state with its own ruling family, Piombino was to be occupied by Cosimo de' Medici from 1548 to 1557) was considered to enable one to interrupt all Italian shipping. It is true that if Genoa should for any reason break with Spain, Piombino would be the only port suitable for linking Italy and Spain. Leghorn did not then possess a good port and Monaco was *poco capax* (Instructions from J. de Vega to Pedro de Marquina, Buschbell, *art. cit.*, p. 338, September, 1545). Many documents referring to Piombino in Arch. Hist. Nacional, Madrid, Catalogue no. 2719, H. Lippomano to the Doge, (A.d.S. Venice), Madrid, 26th January 1587: the Grand Duke of Tuscany was prepared to give a million in gold for the possession of the *presidios*, or even for a single one. Philip II refused 'perché tra le altre cose con haverebbe dalle parte di Catalogna et da tutte le rive di Spagne fino a Napoli alcun porto di conto . . .'.

Barbary coast immediately becomes clear. A lookout post was sufficient to halt or impede the procession of coastbound ships.

If the practices of navigation on the high seas did not reach the Mediterranean, it was not for lack of technical competence. Mediterranean mariners knew how to handle the astrolabe and had used the lodestone for a long time; or could have if they had wanted to. Indeed the Italians had been the forerunners and instructors of the Iberians on the routes to the New World.[15] Mediterranean – or 'Levantine' ships as they were known in Spain – yearly made the voyage from the inland sea to London or Antwerp. They were familiar with Atlantic waters. Ships from the Mediterranean even made direct crossings to the New World; the *Pélerine* of Marseilles, for instance, which in 1531 sailed to Brazil and back only to be captured by Portuguese ships at Málaga[16] at the end of the run. In November, 1586, the galleon of the Grand Duke of Tuscany on arriving at Alicante allowed herself to be chartered for the 'Indies'; she carried munitions for the fortress at Havana and brought back merchandise left behind by a vessel that had been unable to make the crossing.[17] In 1610 two Tuscan vessels were unloading cargoes carried directly from the Indies.[18] Ragusan ships may have rounded the Cape of Good Hope[19] not long after Vasco da Gama; they certainly reached the New World.

If Mediterranean sailors persisted in using the old coastal routes, apart from the few direct crossings mentioned above, it was because the old ways fulfilled their needs and suited the complexities of its coastline; it was impossible to sail far in the Mediterranean without touching land. And a coastline always in sight is the navigator's best aid and surest compass. Even a low-lying coast is a protection against the sudden and violent Mediterranean winds, especially off-shore winds. When the *mistral* blows in the Gulf of Lions, the best course even today is to keep close to the coast and use the narrow strip of calmer water near the shore. So the lodestone was not essential to Mediterranean life. In 1538, unlike the Spanish galleys, the French galleys did not use it.[20] Again they could have if they had wanted to.

[15] Richard Ehrenburg, *Das Zeitalter der Fugger*, 1922, I, 373, Paul Herre, *Weltgeschichte am Mittelmeer*, 1930, p. 229–231.

[16] P. Gaffarel, *Histoire du Brésil français au XVIe siècle*, 1878, p. 100–101.

[17] A.d.S. Venice, H° Lippomano to the Doge, Madrid, 19th November, 1586.

[18] A.d.S. Florence, Mediceo 2079, f^os 337 and 365. The ships were probably Italian. For a direct voyage from Brazil to Leghorn, but probably by a Portuguese, ship, see Mediceo 2080, 29th November, 1581. There is also mention of a ship sent 'alle Indie' by the Grand Duke Ferdinand to discover new lands, dated 1609, in Baldinucci *Giornale di ricordi*, Marciana, VI, XCIV. Could there be an error of a year in the date? The Grand Duke Ferdinand was in agreement with the Dutch to colonize part of Brazil at the beginning of the seventeenth century, Giuseppe Gino Guarnieri, *Un audace impresa marittima di Ferdinando I dei Medici, con documenti e glossario indocaraibico*, Pisa, 1928, p. 24, notes.

[19] J. Cvijić, *La péninsule balkanique*, 1918, p. 377.

[20] Édouard Petit, *André Doria, un amiral condottiere au XVIe siècle, 1466–1560*, 1887, p. 175. Belon writes, *op. cit.*, p. 92, 'the ancients had more difficulty in navigating than we do now . . . and usually did not lose sight of land. But now that everyone knows the virtue of the Lodestone, navigation is easy'. And he mentions the use corsairs made of the lodestone. But the corsairs of course were the very ships which did need to sail away from the coast, in order to surprise other vessels by coming from the open sea. The compass is supposed to have arrived in the Mediterranean from China in the twelth century. But is this certain? F. C. Lane, 'The Economic Meaning of the Invention of the compass' in *The American Historical Review*, vol. LXVIII, No. 3, April, 1963, p. 615.

Besides, sailing close to shore was more than a protection against the elements. A nearby port could also be a refuge from a pursuing corsair. In an emergency the ship could run aground and the crew escape by land. This was how Tavernier escaped a corsair in 1654 in the Gulf of Hyères; he even had the luck not to lose the ship in the incident.

'Tramping' also made it possible to take on cargo. It gave ample opportunity for bargaining, and for making the most of price differences. Every sailor, from captain to cabin-boy would have his bundle of merchandise on board, and merchants or their representatives would travel with their wares. The round trip, which could last several weeks or months, was a long succession of selling, buying, and exchanging, organized within a complicated itinerary. In the course of the voyage, the cargo would often have completely altered its nature. Amid the buying and selling, care was always taken to call at some port, such as Leghorn, Genoa, or Venice, where it was possible to exchange spices, leather, cotton, or coral for metal currency. Only the big specialized salt and grain ships had any resemblance to the destination-conscious shipping of today. The others were more like travelling bazaars. The calls at port were so many opportunities for buying, selling, reselling, and exchanging goods, not to mention the other pleasures of going ashore.

There was the further advantage of the almost daily renewal of supplies, rations, water, and wood, which was the more necessary since the boats were of small capacity and on board rations, even drinking water, quickly deteriorated. Frequent stops were made to 'faire aiguade et lignade', 'to take on water and wood', as Rabelais says.

This slow-motion shipping, if we can call it that, governed the geography of the coastal regions, in the sense that for one big ship capable of by-passing ports we must reckon dozens of boats and small sailing vessels that were processionary by vocation. In the same way that along land routes, such as the Roman roads in the western countries, daily halts led to the remarkably regular establishment of villages, along the coastal sea routes, the ports are found a day's voyage apart. Where river estuaries were unsuitable because of sandbanks, they grew up on the sheltered shores of bays. In between them there was practically nothing.[21] Sometimes on a

[21] Cf. Bisschop's remarks, *op. cit.*, p. 332, on the arid and unwelcoming coast of Mediterranean Spain; Siegfried's note, *op. cit.*, p. 319, on the dry and often deserted coasts of the Mediterranean. Similar remarks in R. Recouly, *Ombre et soleil d'Espagne*, 1934, p. 174; hundreds of kilometres without seeing towns or villages. These coasts are deserted but also without shelter: so the coast of Spain from Cape Palos to Cape Salon affords no shelter, apart from Valencia and Alicante, except from offshore winds (*Instructions Nautiques*, no. 345, p. 96). Along the *entire* Mediterranean Spanish

coast where the hinterland was sparsely populated, like North Africa, a port, with its indispensable source of water, might exist as a meeting point for boats and fishermen, without a town having grown up around it: proof, if it were needed, that the functions of a port are not sufficient to create a town.

This is more than the picturesque sideshow of a highly coloured history. It is the underlying reality. We are too inclined to pay attention only to vital communications; they may be interrupted or restored; all is not necessarily lost or saved. Everyday coastal shipping has untiringly spun threads connecting the different areas of the sea which may pass unnoticed in the great movements of history.

The early days of Portuguese discovery. Finally, it is of some interest to watch how the Portuguese, at the beginning of the fifteenth century, tackled the immense problem of navigation on the high seas, in the Atlantic, which was entirely new to them. At the time of the expedition against Ceuta in 1415, the inexperience of the Portuguese had been obvious. It was only with great difficulty that they had managed to master the currents of the Straits of Gibraltar.[22] The chronicler de Barros says quite clearly that his compatriots were familiar with the declination and the astrolabe, but until 1415 'they had not been accustomed to venture far on the high seas'.[23] One historian has even said of the early Portuguese discoverers, following the endless African coastline, that in the lifetime of Henry the Navigator they were still 'primarily timid and fearful coast-huggers, with no spirit of adventure'[24] – Mediterranean sailors, in fact, despite their experience of the ocean. However, once the caravels had been perfected – the revolutionary ships developed in 1439–1440 to meet the difficulties encountered on the return voyage from Guinea of a head wind and contrary currents – they had to take to the open sea and make for the Azores in order to reach Lisbon, steering a vast, semi-circular course.[25] After that they began to take to the sea in earnest and very quickly made up for lost time.

The narrow seas, home of history. The Mediterranean is not a single sea but a succession of small seas that communicate by means of wider or narrower entrances. In the two great east and west basins of the Mediterranean there is a series of highly individual narrow seas between the land masses,

coast, there is no natural protection against sea-winds (*ibid.* p. 1.). On the bare mountainous coast of Provence, see Honoré Bouche, *Chorographie, ou des descriptions de la Provence . . .* 1664, p. 18.

[22] Richard Hennig, *Terrae Incognitae*, 2nd edition, 1953, III, p. 261.

[23] João de Barros, *Da Asia*, Dec. I, book I, ch. 2, Venice 1551, p. 7.

[24] Georg Friederici, *Der Charakter der Entdeckung und Eroberung Amerikas Durch die Europäer*, 1936, II p. 23.

[25] Vitorino Magalhães-Godinho, *L'Économie de l'Empire portugais aux XVe et XVIe siècles. L'or et le poivre. Route de Guinée et route du poivre*, Paris, 1958. Typed thesis, Sorbonne, p. XLVIII ff.

each with its own character, types of boat, and its own laws of history;[26] and as a rule the narrowest seas are the richest in significance and historical value, as if man had found it easiest to impose himself on the Mediterranean in a small compass.

Even today, these seas still maintain their local life, with the picturesque survival of old sailing vessels and traditional fishing boats.[27] At Sfax, in the Sea of the Syrtes, one can still see the *mahonnes* with their triangular sails, and the sponge fishers' boats, the *kamaki*, manned by men from the Kerkenna and Djerba islands who still fish with a trident, a vision from the past.[28] Théophile Gautier had just passed Cape Malea and the Greek islands and calm waters were coming into sight when suddenly 'the horizon was filled with sails; schooners, brigs, caravels, argosies, crossing the blue water in all directions'. The narrow seas have kept their elusive enchantment to this day.[29] The survival of these archaic forms of transport, of circuits that have been in existence for centuries is in itself a subject for reflection. Their importance now as in the past lies in short trips, collecting small cargoes. Their security lies in the narrow and familiar compass in which they operate. Difficulties begin only when they embark on long voyages, if they have to leave their native sea and sail out past dangerous headlands. 'He who sails past Cape Malea,' says a Greek proverb, 'must forget his homeland.'[30]

Linked by shipping routes which made large-scale trade possible, these narrow seas were far more important in the sixteenth century than the two great basins, the Ionian Sea to the east, and the western Mediterranean bounded by Sardinia, Corsica, Europe, and Africa. Both of these, particularly the former, were maritime Saharas; trading vessels would either skirt the edges of these expanses or cross as fast as they could.

The maritime activity of the Mediterranean was carried on at the edges of these two forbidding stretches, in the security of the narrow seas: to the east, the Black Sea, only partly Mediterranean; the Aegean or Archipelago Sea (in the sixteenth century even in French it was known by the Italian word *Arcipelago*); in the centre the Adriatic and the seas between Africa and Sicily which do not have a particular name; to the west the Tyrrhenian Sea, the true Sea of Italy, the 'Etruscan' sea between Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica and the west coast of Italy; and in the far west, between southern Spain and North Africa, another sea without a name, the 'Mediterranean Channel', which could have as its eastern boundary a line running from Cape Matifou near Algiers to Cape de la Nao, near Valencia, and which joins the Atlantic at the Straits of Gibraltar.

[26] Y. M. Goblet, *Le Temps*, 30th April, 1938.

[27] The multicoloured boats of the Aegean with their raised bulwarks (W. Helwig, *Braconniers de la mer en Grèce*, Fr. trans. 1942, p. 133). In the sea around the Balearics elegant schooners can still be seen carrying oranges, R. Recouly, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

[28] Emmanuel Grévin, *Djerba l'île heureuse et le Sud Tunisien*, 1937, p. 35.

[29] Théophile Gautier, *Voyage à Constantinople*, 1853, p. 36 Cf. the present day port of Cavalla (M. N. 'Kawalla die Stadt am weissen Meer', *Kölnische Zeitung*, 16th July, 1942); sailing boats laden with tobacco, olives, and dried squids . . .

[30] Cdt. A. Thomazi, *Histoire de la Navigation*, 1941, p. 23.

Even within these seas smaller areas can be distinguished, for there is hardly a bay in the Mediterranean that is not a miniature community, a complex world in itself.[31]

The Black Sea, preserve of Constantinople. The far-off Black Sea, limit of Mediterranean shipping, was ringed round by wild lands, with a few exceptions, both uncivilized and de-civilized. Great mountains bordered it to the south and east, hostile mountains through which the roads made their difficult way from Persia, Armenia, and Mesopotamia to the great centre of Trebizond. To the north by contrast rolled the great Russian plains, a land of passage and nomadism, over which a jealous guard was still maintained by the Crimean Tartars in the sixteenth century. It was only in the following century that the Russian outlaws, the Cossacks, were to reach the shore of the sea and begin their piracy at the expense of the Turks. Already in the sixteenth century, the Muscovites were taking advantage of the winter to make 'courreries' towards its shores.[32]

The Black Sea at this period, as indeed throughout its history was an important economic region. In the first place there was the produce of its own shores: dried fish, the botargo and caviar of the 'Russian' rivers, the wood indispensable to the Turkish fleet, iron from Mingrelia[33], grain, and wool; the latter was collected at Varna and loaded along with hides on to the great Ragusan vessels; the grain was cornered by Constantinople. Secondly, there was the merchandise transported through the Black Sea; goods passing through to Central Asia and Persia and goods brought by caravan in transit to Constantinople and the West. Unfortunately we do not know a great deal about this two-way trade with the East in the sixteenth century. One has the impression that Constantinople monopolized the long-distance trade as well as the domestic trade of the Black Sea, acting as a screen between this Mediterranean extremity and the rest of the sea. Almost on its doorstep, the Black Sea was the supplying region without which the mighty capital could not survive, for it was only inadequately provided for by the tribute of the Balkans (mostly sheep) and

[31] For individual descriptions, cf. on the bay of Naples, *Instructions Nautiques*, no. 368, p. 131; on the gulf of Vólos, with its many islands, Helwig, *op. cit.*, p. 16; on the gulf of Quarnero, H. Hochholzer, 'Die Küsten der Adria als Kultur-Siedlungs-und Wirtschaftsbereich', in *Geogr. Zeitschr.*, 1932.

[32] Dolu to the bishop of Dax, Constantinople, 18th February, 1561, E. Charrière, *op. cit.*, II, p. 650–652: on the subject of the Muscovite raids on Tana. The Muscovites took advantage of the frozen rivers, returning home in the spring (cf. *ibid.*, p. 647–648 and 671–672, 5th February and 30th August). For Russian sea pirates, cf. a reference in 1608: Avisos de Constantinople, 12th June, 1608, A.N. K 1679. The Pasha of the Sea thought of sending galleys out against them, but galleys, he was told, would be powerless against their small boats. It would be better to send '*caiches que son barcos medianos*'. In 1622 there were raids on Black Sea ports by Cossacks in the service of Poland; and Kaffa, 'the capital of Tartary' was sacked, Naples, *Storia, Patria*, XXVIII, B. 11, f^{os} 230 and 230 v°; 1664 J. B. Tavernier, *op. cit.*

[33] Mingrelia, notes Tavernier (*op. cit.*, Persian Travels, p. 114) in 1664 is always on good terms with Turkey 'because the greatest part of the Steel and Iron that is spent in *Turkie* comes out of Mingrelia through the Black Sea'.

the wheat, rice and beans brought in by the fleets of Alexandria, along with spices and drugs. Pierre Belon[34] mentions the butter that was carried from Mingrelia to Constantinople 'in the freshly flayed and undressed hides of oxen and cows', probably on board one of the innumerable Greek *caramusalis* that plied the Black Sea, although they were better suited to the short journeys in the Archipelago than to this dangerous sea,[35] which was often rough and shrouded in fog. In October, 1575, a single storm sank a hundred of these little ships laden with grain.[36]

In the sixteenth century the Black Sea was attached to Constantinople, just as in former times it had been the preserve of Miletus, of Athens, and after 1265 of the Italians and Genoese[37] who installed themselves at Tana and Kaffa in the protected site in the south of the Crimea,[38] sheltered by the mountains of the peninsula from the peoples of the northern steppe; they also settled in Constantinople (only leaving in 1453 and then not altogether), and were only dislodged from their Crimean ports by the Turks later on, in the last quarter of the fifteenth century. Kaffa was taken in 1479. There followed a major realignment of the land routes leading to the sea. They no longer went to the Crimea but to Constantinople instead. In the Moldavian lands the routes leading to Kilia and Cetatea Alba were replaced by the great trade route towards Galatz which thereafter tapped the trade of the Danube and, beyond it, that of Poland.[39]

From then on the Black Sea became the recognized granary of the enormous Turkish capital. The Ragusans, however, continued to make their way in, at least until the 1590's, loading up whole boats at Varna with fleeces and hides: *montinini*, *vacchini*, and *buffalini*. They managed to do the same thing on the Sea of Marmara, at Rodosto.[40] Perhaps to avoid customs expenses? In any event, at the end of the sixteenth century the Ragusans abandoned both ports almost simultaneously under what circumstances we do not know. The Black Sea was more completely closed to the west than ever, at any rate closed to shipping: for there seems to have been a victory of land routes over sea passages at this time, as we shall see.

Was it simply that Constantinople locked the door, to put an end to the

[34] Pierre Belon, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

[35] 'That furious sea . . .', 19th May, 1579, E. Charrière, *op. cit.*, III, p. 799. The ships of the Black Sea were often badly ballasted. Cf. the wreck of a ship carrying planks, Tott, *Memoirs*, *op. cit.*, II, p. 170.

[36] Avisos de Constantinople, 17th, 18th, 24th October, 1575, Simancas E° 1334.

[37] The Black Sea was opened to the Italians towards 1265, by the political decline of Byzantium: G. Bratianu, *Études byzantines*, 1939, p. 159.

[38] A. Philippson, 'Das Byzantinische Reich als geographische Erscheinung', in: *Geogr. Zeitschr.* 1934, p. 448.

[39] I. Nistor, *Handel und Wandel in der Moldau*, 1912, p. 23.

[40] The question of Western trade in the Black Sea is a large subject. For Ragusan trade, see below p. 318. From time to time, Venice continued to send ships as far as the Black Sea (H. F° to the Doge, Pera, 25th May, 1561, A.d.S. Venice, Seno. Secreta, Const. Fza 3C, refers to a small Venetian ship which set out for Mingrelia). Note (A.d.S. Florence, Mediceo 4274) that in the capitulation project between Florence and Constantinople, the Florentines demanded freedom of shipping in the Black Sea, 1577.

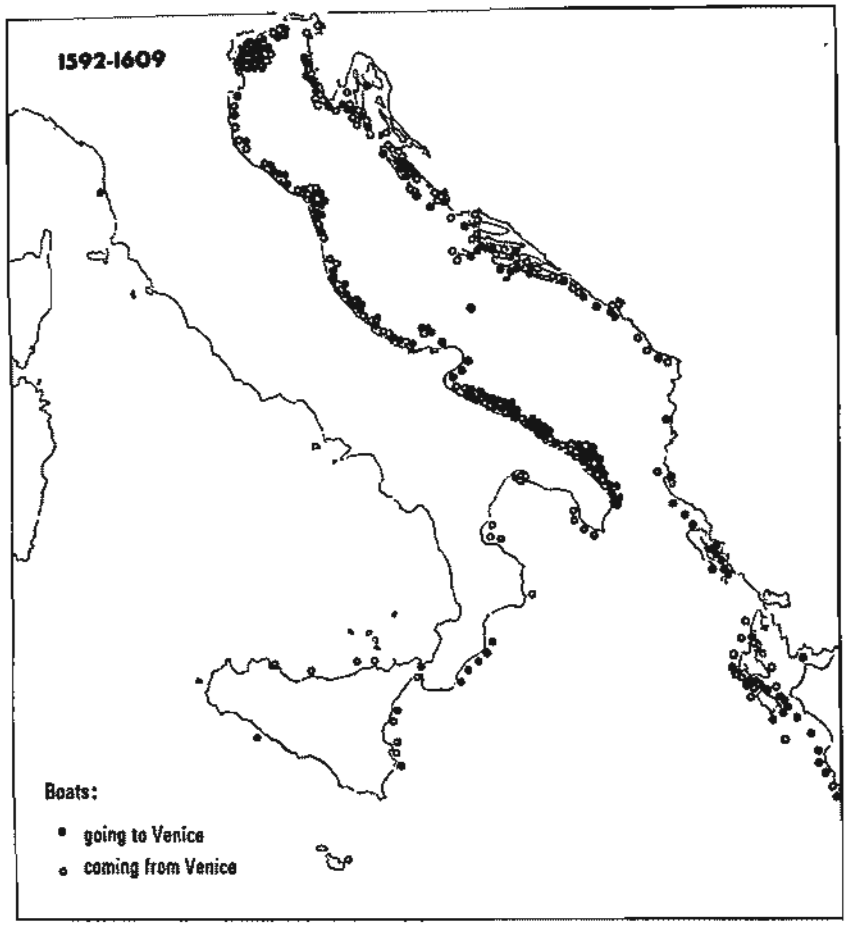


Fig. 8: *The wrecks of boats sailing to Venice from 1592 to 1609*

(From A. Tenenti, *Naufrages, Corsaires et Assurances maritimes à Venise*, 1959). They indicate the importance of the coastal route.

rôle of the Black Sea as the 'turntable of international trade' at the end of the Middle Ages?[41] Or perhaps the closure had other more distant origins. The Black Sea was the terminus not only of the roads that met at Trebizond or Sinope, but also of what is generally known as the silk route. Now it seems fairly clear that this route was interrupted from the fourteenth century on. The trade that had made it rich turned towards Persia. Turkestan certainly suffered from the change. Meanwhile, in the middle of the sixteenth century, the Russians advanced along the Volga. The

[41] G. I. Bratianu, 'La mer Noire, plaque tournante du trafic international à la fin du Moyen Age', in: *Revue du Sud-Est Européen*, 1944, p. 36–39.

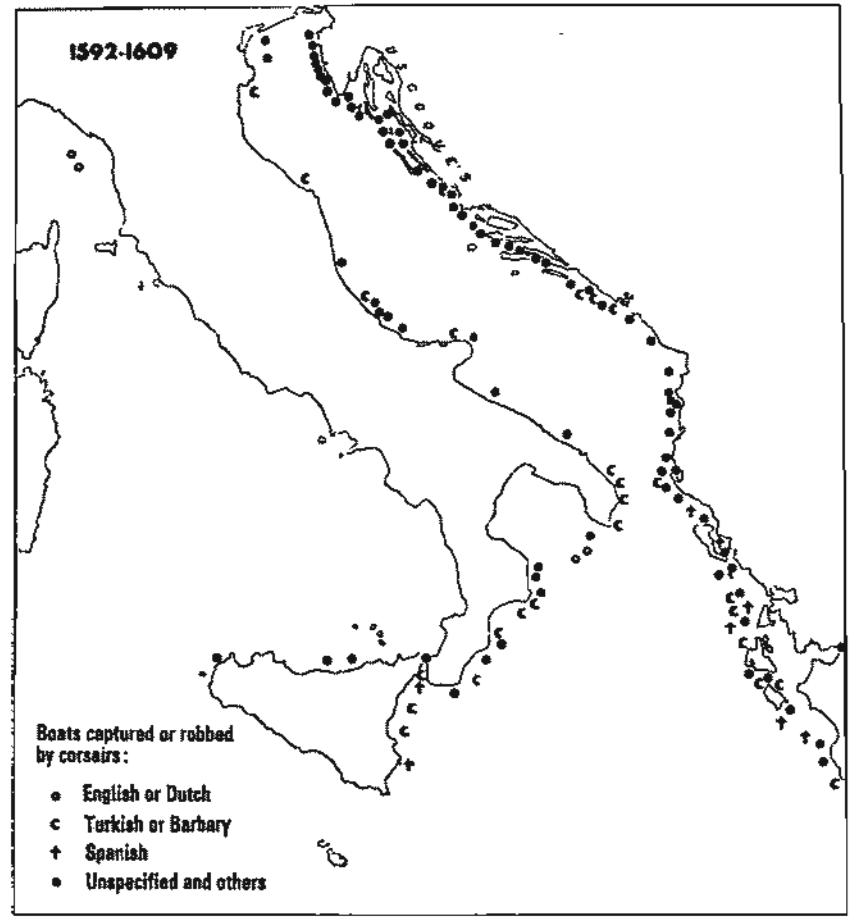
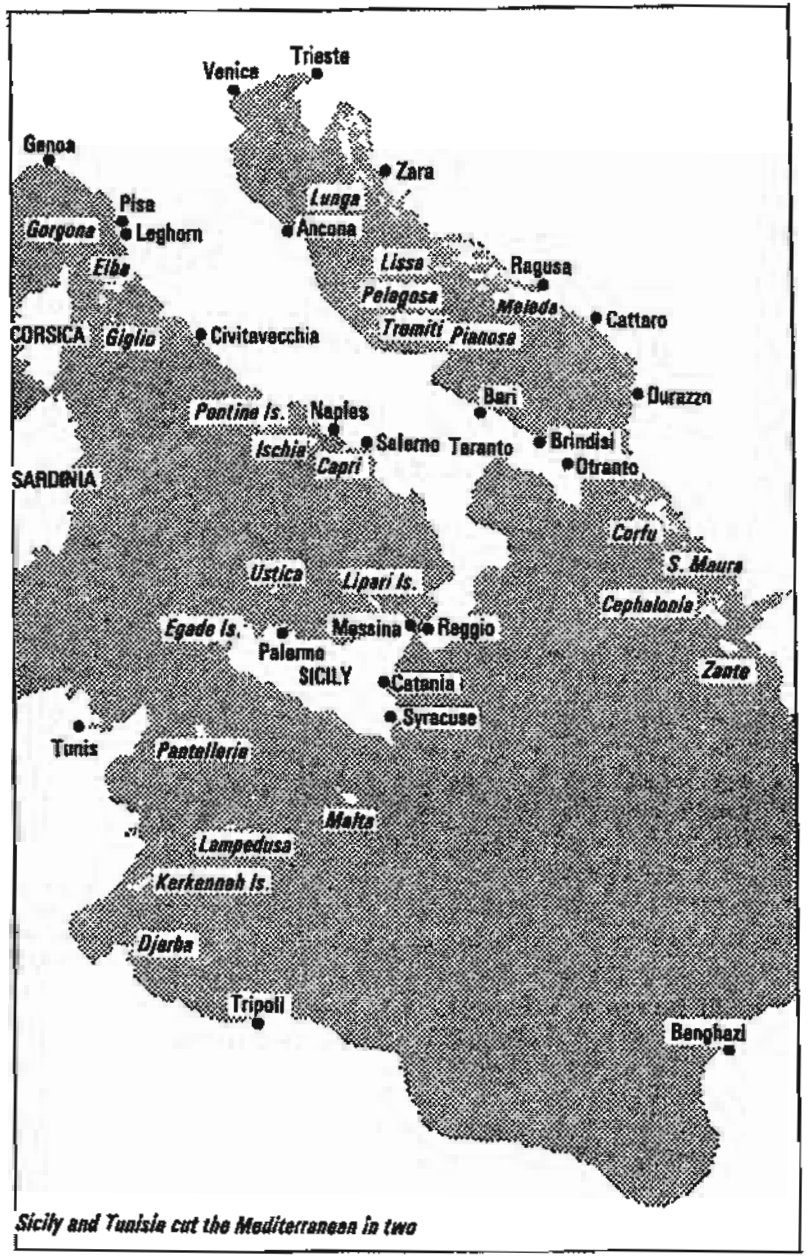


Fig. 9: *Captured vessels during the same period, from the same source*

khanate of Kazan, an eastern parallel to the kingdom of Granada, enriched by the caravan traffic and long coveted by the Russians, fell into their hands half-ruined as a result of troubles it is difficult to assess, which may or may not have followed the interruption of the Turkestan route. Ivan the Terrible took Astrakhan in 1556. This time the door was shut and bolted, in spite of the Turkish attempt of 1569–70, the great unknown event of history.[42]

[42] Cf. below, II, Part III, ch. 3, section 2. On the question of a canal linking the Don and the Volga, cf. its previous history. J. Mazzei, *Politica doganale differenziale*, 1931, p. 40; even more useful is W. E. D. Allen, *Problems of Turkish power in the Sixteenth century*, 1963, p. 22 ff.



Sicily and Tunisia cut the Mediterranean in two

Fig. 10: *Sicily and Tunisia cut the Mediterranean in two*

The Archipelago, Venetian and Genoese. The archipelago, 'the most hospitable sea of the globe', is a succession of barren islands and even poorer coasts. This too can only be understood in connection with a great town. In classical times it was the parade ground of Athens. Later it became the basis of Byzantine sea-power, which through its control of this sea was able to preserve the Aegean and then drive out Islam which had installed itself briefly in Crete in the ninth century. Through this sea too, communication with the West by the seas of Greece and Sicily and the routes of the Adriatic, was safeguarded, before Venice in turn rose to greatness.

Centuries passed, and the Archipelago became Venetian and Genoese. The two rival cities divided between them its principal islands. They installed upon them their patricians, guardians of the empire, landowners, planters, merchants too, in fact colonial aristocracies which remained separate from the Orthodox populations. These might become 'Latinized' in their habits, but would never be assimilated to the foreign invader. It was the usual story, and it ended with the mutual solidarity of the colonial settlers. When Venice supplanted Genoa in Cyprus in 1479, the planters of both colonial powers came to an agreement without too much difficulty: an obvious and inevitable case of class discipline.

In the Archipelago, the Latins defended their positions with greater ease and, above all, efficiency than they had in the Black Sea, with means that were for a long time superior to those of the attacker. However Negropont (Euboea) was captured in 1479; Rhodes fell in 1522; Chios was occupied in 1566 without a shot fired; Cyprus after an easy landing and two sieges, at Nicosia and Famagusta, in 1570–72; and Crete in 1669, after a twenty-five year war.

But the struggle for the Archipelago was by no means confined to a series of pitched battles. It also took the everyday form of a social war. More than once the Greek 'natives' betrayed their masters, at Cyprus and later at Crete. The Archipelago collaborated in the Turkish victory, and even before that victory Greek sailors had been tempted by employment in the fleet of the Grand Turk, whose crews often came from the Archipelago. The Cretans were perhaps the readiest to join the fleet of the Grand Signior at the beginning of each summer for the campaign that was about to begin. The recruiters would find them in the taverns of Pera, near the Arsenal;[43] this was over a century before Crete fell into Turkish hands.

Constantinople could also offer the Greeks, besides employment in its armies, the profits of Black Sea and Egyptian voyages. In the gigantic task of supplying the capital, there was a place for the grain-bearing *calques* and *caramusalis*,[44] for the *gerbe* carrying horses and wood, indeed for all

[43] J. W. Zinkeisen, *Geschichte des osmanischen Reiches in Europa*, 1840–1863, III, p. 29 ff.

[44] Robert Mantran, *Istanbul dans la seconde moitié du XVIIe siècle*, 1963, lists the types of Turkish boats whose names are recognisable: *firkata* (frigate), *zaïka* (calque) *kalyon* (galleon), p. 318, note 2; should we distinguish between the *calque*, the Greek boat *par excellence* which transported wheat in the Aegean and the Sea of Marmara, and the *caramusali*, *Haramürsel*, in the Sea of Marmara only, 'from the name of the

the Greek sailing vessels of the Archipelago. To all this could be added the attraction of religion: Constantinople was the Rome of the Orthodox Church.

And in the first decades of the sixteenth century there began a fresh phase of Greek expansion over the whole of the Mediterranean. The career of the Barbarossas, sailors from Lesbos converted to Islam, who settled first in Djerba then at Djidjelli, and provided transport for Spanish Moslems who wanted to leave the Peninsula, later becoming corsairs and, finally, after 1518, rulers of Algiers – this whole episode was not an accident. Neither was the career of Dragut, another Greek whom we find in the 1540s on the Tunisian coast and in 1556 installed at Tripoli in Barbary, in place of the Knights of Malta whom the Turks had expelled five years earlier.

Between Tunisia and Sicily. It will be difficult to denote with precision the role played by the ill-defined sea between Africa and Sicily, with its deep waters full of fish, its reefs of coral and sponges, and its islands, often uninhabited because they are so small: La Favignana, Marettimo, and Levanzo at the western tip of Sicily; Malta, Gozo, and Pantelleria in the middle of the sea; and Tabarka, La Galite, Zembra, Djerba, and the Kerkenna Islands near the Tunisian coast. Its boundaries correspond to those of the ancient geological 'bridge' stretching from North Africa to Sicily: to the east a line drawn from Tripoli to Syracuse, to the west a line from Bône to Trapani. The essential axis of this sea is north–south, from Sicily to Africa. Ships travelling from east to west, from the Levant to the Atlantic, passed through, but this traffic was generally diverted to the north towards the main route passing through the Straits of Messina. Moreover, in the Sicily–Africa sector, this traffic did not have the frequency of the north–south currents.

These currents have dictated its history, making the whole complex shift sometimes to the south, sometimes to the north, with the tide of events. The whole region was Moslem with the Aghlabids, and so, from 827, when the conquest began, to 1071, when Palermo was recaptured, a citadel of Islam; then it was Norman, or on the way to being so from the eleventh century, for the Norman advance from Naples to Sicily did not stop at the reconquest of the island; it spread southwards by war, privateering, trade, and even emigration to the African territories. The Angevins and Aragonese were later to continue this policy dictated by proximity. Several times they attacked the African coast; levied tribute from the emirs of Tunis; held Djerba from 1284 to 1335. Meanwhile Christian merchants settled everywhere, particularly in the *souks* of Tunis and Tripoli, and obtained privilege upon privilege. Christian soldiers, and in particular the Catalan mercenary, later to be master of Sicily (the Sicilian Vespers took place in 1282), found adventures in Africa almost as profitable as in

port near Izmit (Nicomedia) where it is built' p. 488–489: a boat with a half-deck, three sails and oars? Western texts do not agree.

the East. As early as the twelfth century Catalan sailors were frequenting the coral reefs of Tabarka.

Political circles in Palermo and Messina were, even in the sixteenth century, continually suggesting projects of African conquest to the vanity and colonial ambitions of the viceroys of Spanish Sicily: first to Juan de la Vega, later to the Duke of Medina Celi, later again to Marcantonio Colonna. These projects translated the dimly felt necessity of uniting the shores and islands of this intermediary region, of bringing together Sicily's wheat, cheese, and barrels of tunny fish, and the oil from Djerba, the leather, wax, and wool of the southern lands, and the gold dust and black slaves of the Sahara trade; the need to control the whole maritime complex and ensure the policing of the coasts, the security of the tunny-boats and the safe fishing of the Barbary coral reefs by fishermen from Trapani, half-Catalans whose boats though poorly armed did not hesitate to attack the vessels of the Barbary corsairs in the sixteenth century, and finally the need to protect from the corsairs the *caricatori* of Sicilian wheat which were often threatened from the south, for piracy here as elsewhere often tended to re-establish a natural balance which had been disturbed by history.

It is customary when discussing Sicily to keep looking to the North, towards Naples, and to regard their two histories as fundamentally opposed, the rise of Naples leading to the decline of Palermo and vice versa. It is even more important to emphasize its links with North Africa, that is the value of this maritime world which our imperfect knowledge or lack of attention has left without a name.

The Mediterranean 'Channel'. The most westerly part of the Mediterranean Sea is an independent, narrow passage between the land masses, easily accessible to man, the Mediterranean 'Channel' as one geographer, René Lespès, has called it. It is a separate world, lying between the Straits of Gibraltar to the west and an eastern limit running from Cape Caxine to Cape de la Nao, or even from Valencia to Algiers. The east–west passage is never easy for shipping; to sail eastwards is to enter the great stretch of the western Mediterranean; to go westwards is to come to the even vaster expanse of the Atlantic, by way of the Straits which are themselves dangerous because of frequent fog, powerful currents, reefs, and sandbanks along the shores. All straits, like projecting headlands, cause an alteration in currents and winds. Here it is particularly marked and the passage is always a complicated operation.

By contrast the north–south journey is comparatively easy. The sea does not act as a barrier between the two great continental masses of Spain and North Africa; but rather as a river which unites more than it divides, making a single world of North and South, a 'bi-continent', as Gilberto Freyre has called it.[45]

Like the corridor between Sicily and Africa, this channel was one of the

[45] *Casa Grande e senzala*, Rio de Janeiro, 5th ed. 1946, I, p. 88; Paul Achard, *La vie extraordinaire des frères Barberousse*, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

conquests of Islam in the Middle Ages; a late conquest – in the tenth century – at the time when the caliphate of Córdoba was reaching the peak of its short-lived glory. The success of the Ummayyads ensured that wheat, men, and mercenaries would be brought over from the Maghreb, and that the produce of the Andalusian cities would be exported in return. The free, or at any rate easy, access to this strip of water meant that the centre of Andalusian maritime life passed from Almeria, with its bustling shipyards, vessels, and silklooms, to Seville, where Mediterranean shipping concentrated in the eleventh century. It brought so much wealth that the port on the Guadalquivir soon began to rival in splendour the old continental capital, Córdoba.

Similarly, Moslem supremacy in the Mediterranean led to the rise or expansion of great sea-towns on the African coast: Bougie, Algiers, and Oran, the last two founded in the tenth century. And twice, the 'African Andalusia', under the Almoravids and then the Almohads, rescued the real Andalusia from Christian pressure, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

Right up to the end of Islam's hold on the Iberian Peninsula – until the thirteenth century at least and after – the 'Channel' remained in Saracen hands from the approaches of Algarve in Portugal to Valencia and even the Balearics. Islam held this channel even longer than the Sicilian Mediterranean, well after Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212, at least until the capture of Ceuta by Dom João of Portugal and his sons in 1415. From that day the passage to Africa was open and the Moslem community left in Granada was condemned; only the long Castilian disputes prolonged its existence. When the war of Granada began again for the last act of the *Reconquista* in 1487, Ferdinand and Isabella used ships from Biscay to blockade its coast.

After the conquest the Christian victors were drawn into taking the southern coast of the Ibero-African channel, but their efforts lacked the conviction and coherence that would have best served Spanish interests. It was a tragedy for Spanish history that after the occupation of Melilla in 1947, of Mers-el-Kebir in 1505, of the Peñon de Velez in 1508, of Oran in 1509, of Mostaganem, Tlemcen, Ténès and the Peñon of Algiers in 1510, this new war of Granada was not pursued with more determination, that this thankless but vital undertaking was sacrificed to the mirage of Italy and the comparatively easy gains in America. Spain's inability, or unwillingness, to develop her initial success, which was perhaps too easy ('It looks,' wrote the royal secretary, Hernando de Zafra, to their Catholic Majesties in 1492, 'as if God wishes to give Your Highnesses these African Kingdoms.'), her failure to pursue the war on the other side of the Mediterranean is one of the great missed opportunities of history. As an essayist wrote,[46] Spain, half-European, half-African, failed to carry out her geographical mission and for the first time in history, the Straits of Gibraltar 'became a political frontier'.[47]

[46] Gonzalo de Reparaz, *Geografiá y política*, Barcelona, 1929, *passim*.
[47] Émile-Félix Gautier, *Les siècles obscurs du Maghreb*, 1927, p. 280.

Along this frontier there was constant warfare, a sign that the essential links had been severed here as well as between Sicily and Africa. Crossing the channel had become difficult. This is easy to see in the case of supplying Oran, which was a precarious undertaking throughout the sixteenth century. From the great 'central station' of Málaga, the *proveedores* organized convoys and chartered ships and boats to send to the *presidio*.[48] They generally sent them in winter, taking advantage of breaks in the weather long enough for the short crossing. Even so the corsairs managed to capture supply ships, which they would then in the normal process of bargaining, offer to sell back at Cape Caxine. In 1563, when the *presidio* was besieged by troops from Algiers, the ships that ran the blockade were *balancelles* and brigantines from Valencia and Andalusia. These small boats were like those that 'in the old days', as an enquiry in 1565 says,[49] used to sail from Cartagena, Cadiz, or Málaga carrying caps from Córdoba and cloth from Toledo to the North African ports: or like the fishing-boats which on the other side of Gibraltar continued to sail the Atlantic, manned by a race of sailors from Seville, San Lucar de Barrameda, or Puerto de Santa Maria, who would fish as far away as Mauritania, and on Sundays go ashore to hear mass in one of the Portuguese *presidios* on the Moroccan coast;[50] or the little boats from Valencia that carried to Algiers rice, Spanish perfumes, and, despite the prohibitions, contraband merchandise.[51]

At the end of the century this now-quiescent part of the sea was aroused abruptly by a dramatic challenge, but not from Spain's traditional rivals: the sailors of Marseilles who had always frequented the Barbary ports, or the sailors of Leghorn, new arrivals after 1575, who were attracted by Tunis and lingered there but who sometimes voyaged as far as Larache[52] and the Moroccan Sous.[53] The new element was the massive invasion by northern ships, especially after the 1590s. These foreigners had to pass through the Straits twice, on the way in and out. On the way out they were expected and a watch was kept for them. Did the Hollanders, as has been claimed,[54] discover a new way of passing through the Straits, which they afterwards taught their pupils, the corsairs of Algiers? It is possible if not altogether certain. In any event, the Spaniards put a great deal of effort into keeping watch and even preventing ships from passing through, using galleys in the calm summer days and galleons in the stormy winter months. From Cape St. Vincent on the Portuguese coast to Cartagena

[48] According to the documents in the series Estado Castilla, at Simancas. Cf. below, II, Part II, ch. 7, end of section 1.
[49] 14th Mars, 1565, Simancas E° 146.
[50] R. Ricard, 'Les Portugais au Maroc', in: *Bulletin de l'Ass. Guillaume Budé*, July, 1937, p. 26.
[51] D. de Haëdo, *Topographia . . . op. cit.*, p. 19 v°.
[52] F. Braudel and R. Romano, *Navires et marchandises à l'entrée du port de Livourne, 1547–1611*, 1951, p. 45.
[53] *Ibid.*, p. 45.
[54] J. Denucé, *L'Afrique au XVIe siècle et le commerce anversois*, 1937, p. 12.

and Valencia,[55] and even as far as Mers-el-Kebir, Ceuta, and Tangier, to Larache, which was occupied on 20th March, 1610, and La Mamora, occupied in August, 1614, we must imagine these lookout posts, alerts, patrols, and battles, often with no glory attached, which persisted until the eighteenth century.[56] The rulers of Spain, her sailors, and advisers were always dreaming of a final solution: to install on Gibraltar itself reinforced cannons which would be sure to hit the ships;[57] to fortify the little island of Perejil off Ceuta;[58] or on the advice of the mad and brilliant adventurer in the service of Spain, the Englishman Anthony Sherley, to take Mogador and Agadir, and thereby hold Morocco, the Catholic King becoming 'absoluto señor de la Berberia'[59] – and this in 1622!

But the struggle was never resolved. The enemy, English, Dutch, or Algerian, would pass through the Straits by stealth, taking advantage of a calm night in winter,[60] or by force, seldom leaving a ship in the hands of the adversary, more often giving the patrol ships a battering with his superior vessels and artillery. An unspectacular or at any rate little-known war, this great Mediterranean drama was fought out at the very gateway to the sea, almost outside its waters. We shall have more to say about it.

The Tyrrhenian Sea. The vast Tyrrhenian Sea – the 'channels of Corsica and Sardinia', as it is called in the sixteenth-century documents – open to neighbouring civilizations and bordered by rich and populous lands, could not fail to have an eventful history.

Earliest times show an area divided among the Etruscans who ruled Tuscany, the cities of the Greek Empire and Sicily, the separate world of Marseilles and its empire, and finally the Carthaginians, who had settled in western Sicily and on the coasts of Sardinia and Corsica, where there were also Etruscan settlements. Roughly speaking the Etruscans controlled the central area; the others its extremities: the Greeks of the South held the route to the Levant; the Carthaginians the route which went from Panormos (Palermo) to Africa by way of Drepanon (Trapani); and lastly the Greeks of Marseilles the route linking the Etruscan sea to the West, just at the point where ships have to wait for favourable winds to cross the Gulf of Lions on the way to Spain.

This early situation already shows what were to be the permanent

[55] Philip II to the Adelantado of Castille, S. Lorenzo, 4th September, 1594, Simancas E° Castilla 171, f°, 107, knew that the Adelantado who was with his ships at Ceuta intended to patrol the coast as far as Cape St. Vincent, and wanted him to go on to Lisbon.

[56] Ustariz, *op. cit.*, p. 260–261 (1724).

[57] A.d.S. Venice, Alvise Correr to the Doge, Madrid, 28th April 1621. It would be unlikely to succeed, notes the Venetian 'because of the great distance between one side of the Straits and the other'.

[58] Xavier A. Flores, *Le 'Peso Politico de todo el mundo' d'Anthony Sherley, 1963*, p. 176.

[59] *Ibid.*, p. 111.

[60] A.d.S. Venice, H° Lippomano to the Doge, Madrid, 19th November, 1586, on the crossing made by Amurat, corsair king of Algiers 'on a dark night'.

features of the Tyrrhenian: the value of the central 'lake' and the importance of the gateways to it. It gives some indication of the reasons why this sea, too vast and open, could never be under the control of one single power, economy, or civilization. Except under the levelling hegemony of Rome, no navy ever maintained a position of supremacy in the sea, neither the Vandals whom Byzantine brought to heel, nor the Saracen fleets since Italy eluded them in the end, neither the Normans nor the Angevins, the former meeting opposition from Byzantium, the latter from both Islam and the Catalans. And Pisa found herself up against the competition of Genoa.

In the sixteenth century, the first place belonged to Genoa, mistress of Corsica. But this position of supremacy had its weaknesses: Genoa was increasingly relying on foreign ships for transport, the first sign of decline. In addition she found herself faced with the Spaniards, who had captured several strong positions in the Tyrrhenian Sea. The trail had been blazed by the Aragonese, who had seized Sicily in 1282 and then in 1325, despite prolonged Genoese resistance, Sardinia, which they needed for communication with Sicily. Catalan expansion – and this was one of its original features – progressed due eastwards from the Balearics by way of Sardinia and Sicily. In these islands, the Catalans installed real maritime colonies, Alghero in Sardinia and Trapani in Sicily.

This expansion was victorious but exhausting. Coming late in time, it had to struggle to find a place for itself, combining piracy with shipping. Barcelona, where it had originated, gradually abdicated the leadership to Valencia, and it was the Valencians who led the successful conquest of the Kingdom of Naples under Alfonso the Magnanimous (1455). The Valencian act, however, was over almost as soon as it had begun, since the crown of Aragon was soon to fall under the control of Castile. At the time of the Italian wars, further change came to the Tyrrhenian: the Castilians replaced the Aragonese as soldiers and officials, both in Naples and in Sicily.[61] From now on Spain with her galleys and *tercios* brought to bear on the Tyrrhenian the full weight of a maritime, military, continental power. It was not a merchant power, however. From the time of Charles V, and in spite of ancient commercial privileges, exports of Catalan cloth to Sicily and Sardinia actually declined. The Emperor, there as elsewhere neglectful of Spanish interests, let the Genoese merchants flood the market with their own textiles. Does this mean Genoa took her revenge and regained her supremacy?

The answer is not so simple. Towards 1550 Genoa forfeited some of her maritime activities, in the Tyrrhenian and elsewhere, to the Ragusans. With their merchantmen, the latter took over the transport of Sicilian wheat and salt and the long distance voyages to Spain, the Atlantic, and the Levant. The Tyrrhenian Sea would almost have become a Ragusan lake if

[61] R. B. Merriman, *The Rise of the Spanish Empire*, 1934, IV, p. 248, 434. Was it, as R. Konetzke suggests, the fault of the Aragonese, too preoccupied with their own minor affairs, *op. cit.*, p. 148? I am reluctant to accept this explanation.

it had not been for the presence of Marseilles (at first modest, it was to become important after the 1570s), and the later rise of Leghorn, which was both a creation and a revival, for Leghorn represented both Pisa and Florence. It also represented the calculated policy of Cosimo de' Medici, who took an early interest in Genoese Corsica.[62] Lastly through the wide passage between Sicily and Sardinia came the disturbing invasion of the Barbary corsairs, who often surprised the coastal areas, far to the north, of Savona, Genoa, Nice, and even Provence. The Tuscan barrage on Elba, at Portoferraio, gave warning of them more often than it stopped them.

This divided and composite sea, the Tyrrhenian, was too closely implicated in the general life of the Mediterranean to have a very distinct identity of its own. But by enabling it to live almost entirely off its own resources, its diversity gave it a certain autonomy. The grain that went to feed its towns and those regions that were either too densely populated or too pastoral to feed themselves, came from Sicily, and until 1550 from Provence – at least it was shipped from Provence, but often came from Burgundy or even further away. Salt came from Trapani; cheese from Sardinia; *vino greco* or *latino* from Naples; salted meat from Corsica; silk from Sicily or Calabria; fruits, almonds, and walnuts, as well as barrels of anchovy or tunny from Provence; iron from Elba; money and capital from either Florence or Genoa. The rest came from outside: leather, spices, dye-woods, wool, and before long salt from Ibiza.

Of these two sets of relationships, internal and external, the internal pattern was the richer. It explains the close intermingling of peoples, civilizations, languages, and arts. It also explains why this stretch of the sea, with its comparatively calm, sheltered waters should have been predominantly a region of small ships. In one year, from June, 1609 to June, 1610, the port of Leghorn alone received over 2500 barques and small vessels[63] – an enormous figure. Only small ships could sail up the Tiber to Rome and its river port Ripa Grande,[64] perhaps carrying the furniture and belongings of a bishop arriving at the Court of Rome, or the casks of *vino greco* that some church official had taken the care to have shipped from the kingdom of Naples. All the statistics, those of Leghorn which are very rich for our period, those of Civitavecchia, Genoa, or Marseilles reveal the immense importance of these short-distance links: from Cape Corse to Leghorn, or Genoa for the transport of wood; or from Rio on Elba to the Tuscan port for iron. It was all carried in these small vessels, barques, *saëtes*, *laudi*, *lulti*, tartans, frigates, *polaccas*.[65] At Genoa the customs registers divided incoming vessels into two classes, *venuta magna* and *venuta parva*, depending on whether the boats had a

[62] Giovanni Livi, *La Corsica e Cosimo dei Medici*, Florence, 1885.
[63] A.d.S. Florence, Mediceo, 2080.
[64] Jean Delumeau, *Vie économique et sociale de Rome dans la seconde moitié du XVIe siècle*, I, 1957, p. 128.
[65] Danilo Presotto, '*Venuta Terra*' et '*Venuta Mare*' *nel biennio 1605–1606*, typescript thesis, Faculty of Economics and Commerce, Genoa, 1964, p. 31 ff.

capacity of more or less than 150 *cantara* (about 30 tons). In a year the port of Genoa received a few dozen 'big' ships and one or two thousand 'small' ones: 47 big and 2283 small ships in 1586; 40 and 1921 in 1587;[66] 107 and 1787 in 1605.[67] (These figures which underestimate the total number relate only to ships paying entrance duty, from which the numerous ships carrying wheat, oil, and salt were exempt.)

Tramping was of course an everyday activity in all these narrow seas, indispensable to the fortunes of trade. But in the Tyrrhenian Sea it was operated on an exceptional scale. This, combined with the documentation, itself exceptional, which we have for the region, makes it possible to see clearly here what we can only guess at in other places: the considerable role played by small cargo boats in economic exchanges. It was not unusual for the master of a Corsican boat to arrive at Leghorn with a few casks of salted meat and a few cheeses,[68] which he would then sell in the streets of the city, regardless of the protests of the local shopkeepers.

However, small boats would not do for everything. If Carthage, in the 'Sea of Sicily', Marseilles at the extreme edge of the Tyrrhenian Sea, and, much later, Genoa were able to play such great roles, it was because they had found a solution, as Vidal de La Blache has pointed out,[69] to the great problem of sailing westward, exposed to the east wind, the dangerous *levante*, and the *mistral*. This required a different kind of ship. At the time of the Median wars both Carthage and Marseilles used for these voyages vessels that were rather heavier than those of other navies, hence their success. Centuries later, at the end of the Middle Ages, it was thanks to a technical innovation, the amplification of the lateen rig, that Genoa was able to find a more effective answer to the problem of long-distance shipping than her rivals. She gained so much from her discovery that from the end of the thirteenth century she was sending her sailors through the Straits of Gibraltar, as far as Flanders.[70]

Genoa retained her preference for heavy ships. In the fifteenth century she was sending on the long run from Chios or Pera to Flanders ships and vessels of which some were over 1000 tons. 'What a pity that you did not see the *Fornara*,' wrote a captain to a friend in Florence in 1447, 'tu avresti avuto piacere maxime a vedere questa nave che ti parebbe in magnificenza'.[71] There was no ship of greater tonnage at the time. On St. Martin's day 1495, the two great 'Genoese ships', which arrived before the port of Baiae 'and there appeared and dropped anchor without entering the port', could have reversed the situation in favour of the French unaided according to Commynes, 'for these two ships alone would have sufficed to take Naples again; for the two ships were fine and tall, one being three thousand *botte* and the other two thousand five hundred *botte*; being

[66] Giovanni Rebora, *Prime ricerche sulla 'Gabella Caratorum Sexaginta Maris,'* typed thesis, Faculty of Economics and Commerce, Genoa, 1964, p. 31.
[67] Danilo Presotto, *op. cit.*, p. 53.
[68] A.d.S. Florence, Mediceo 2080.
[69] *Principles of Human Geography*, p. 432.
[70] See below p. 299.
[71] Jacques Heers, *Gênes au XVe siècle*, 1961, p. 275.

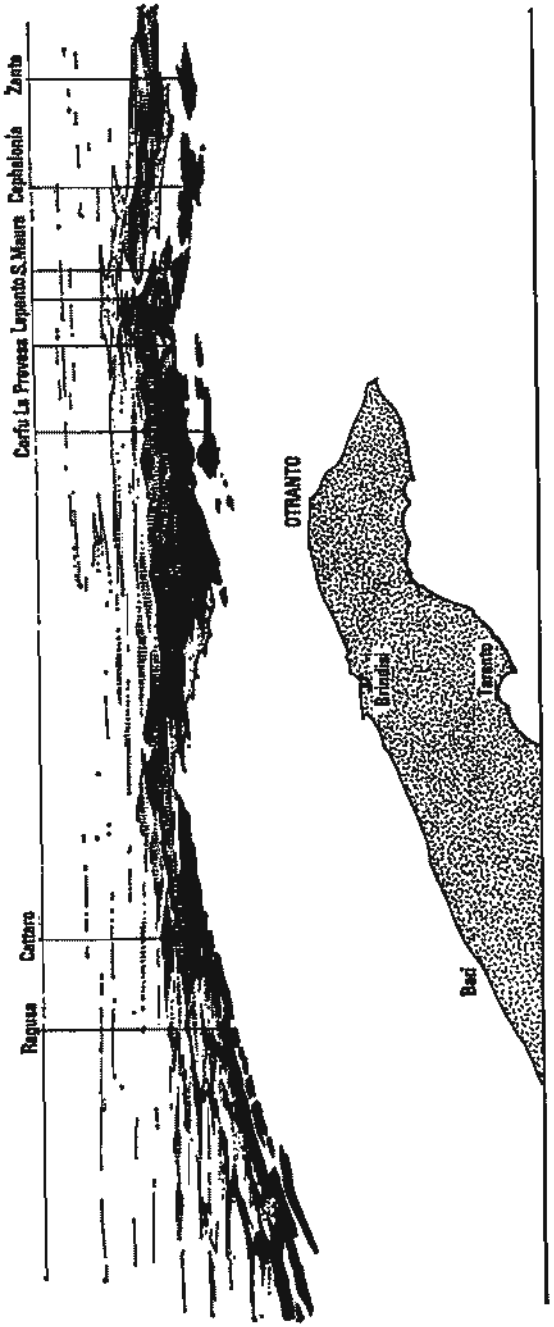


Fig. 11: *Corfu, lying opposite Otranto, commands the entrance to the Adriatic*
Note the positions of the great naval encounters: La Prevesa, 1538; Lepanto, 1571. Sketch by J. Bertin.

called by name the Gallienne and the Espinole . . .'.[72] But neither of them intervened to the extent of moving from Baiae to the nearby city.

These details are more relevant to the central problem than they might seem. For one often finds that power, supremacy and zones of influence in a maritime region can be a matter of technical superiority in details such as the sails, oars, helms, shape of hull, and tonnage of the ships.

The Adriatic.[73] The Adriatic is perhaps the most unified of all the regions of the sea. It provides material for all the problems implied in a study of the Mediterranean as a whole.

Longer than it is wide, it is in effect a north–south passage. To the north it is bordered by the flat stretch of coastline from Pesaro and Rimini to the gulf of Trieste, where the plain of the Po meets the Mediterranean. To the west it is bounded by the Italian coast, often low and marshy, although only a short way inland, overlooking the *Sottovento*, runs the ridge of the Appenines from which a series of mountain buttes project towards the sea, one, the Monte Gargano, conspicuous by its oak forests. To the east it meets a string of rocky islands, the Dalmatian islands, immediately behind which rise the barren mountains of the Balkan land mass, the unending white wall of the Dinaric Alps, forming the edge of the great *karst* plateau behind the Dalmatian coast. Lastly, to the south, the Adriatic opens into the Ionian Sea through the Strait of Otranto between Cape Otranto on the Italian side and Cape Linguetta in Albania. The channel is narrow: the charts give its width as 72 kilometres. As early as the third century B.C. the *lemboi* could cross it in a day, under full sail with a favourable wind.[74] So could the frigates that in the sixteenth century carried dispatches for the viceroy of Naples to the Italian coast from Corfu and Cephalonia and vice versa. A Spanish report indicates that 'dende Cabo de Otranto se veen las luces de la Velona'.[75] From an aeroplane flying towards Athens, today's traveller can see simultaneously the Albanian coast and Corfu, Otranto, and the Gulf of Taranto; little apparently separates them.

This narrowing at the southern end is the essential characteristic of the basin: it gives it unity. Control of that narrow passage amounted to control

[72] *Mémoires de Messire Philippe de Comines, augmentés par M. l'abbé Lenglet du Fresnay*, ed. London and Paris, 1747, IV, p. 103. The ships had a capacity of 2100 and 1750 tons at most, and in fact probably 1500 and 1250.

[73] Mapa del Mar Adriatico, 1568, Sim. E°, 540. There is an enormous literature on the subject: cf. the few lines in Le Danois, *op. cit.*, p. 107; A Philippson, *op. cit.*, p. 40–41; J. Boucard, 'L'histoire récente de l'Adriatique' in *C.R.S. de la Soc. géologique de France*, no. 2, March, 1925. H. Hochholzer, *art. cit.*, in *Geogr. Zeitschr.*, 1932 p. 93–97, gives some precise measurements: from Venice to the Straits of Otranto the Adriatic measures 700 kilometres; its area – 140,000 square kilometres – is therefore only one-sixth as big again as the Gulf of Finland. Reduced to a circle it would have a diameter of 492 kilometres. Its continental and island coasts measure respectively 3887 and 1980 kilometres a total of 5867 kilometres. Except for the Venetian and Albanian littoral, there is a submarine contour of –10 metres all round the coast.

[74] Maurice Holleaux, *Rome, la Grèce et les monarchies helléniques*, 1921, p. 176–177.

[75] B.N. Paris, Esp. 127, f° 7. Early XVIIth century.

of the Adriatic. But the problem was to know which was the best vantage point for keeping watch over the straits. The key positions were not the active ports of Apulia, Brindisi, Otranto and Bari, which were occupied by Venice, twice but not for long, in 1495 and 1528, and which she thought of occupying again in 1580 for the sake of her trading interests.[76] The Turks too held Otranto briefly, after the sack of 1480 which outraged Italian Christendom. But the gateway to the Adriatic could not be controlled from the Italian side. The Peninsula is here 'more than waist-deep in the sea'; it was the Balkan coast opposite which commanded the Adriatic, as was noted by Saint-Gouard, French ambassador at Madrid, who wrote to Charles IX, on 17th December, 1572, 'If it is true that the Grand Turk is building a fort at the entrance to the gulf of Quatero [Cattaro], in order the easier to take the said Quatero, then I hold him to be master of the Adriatic and to have it within his power to make a descent on Italy and thereby surround it by land and sea.'[77]

In fact the key position was further south, on Corfu. And Venice had possessed the island since 1386. It was here that shipping concentrated, in the shelter of the east coast, poor but mountainous and therefore a protection.[78] To enter or leave the Adriatic usually meant sailing past Corfu. This island, as a sententious text of the Senate (17th March, 1550) says, was the 'heart' of the Venetian State 'regarding shipping as much as any other aspect'.[79] The Signoria therefore devoted much attention to it,[80] sparing no expense in fortifying the island, spending such large sums of money, says a document of 1553,[81] 'che chi potesse veder li conti si stupiria'. Fresne-Canaye, who was there in 1572, admired the huge fortress towering above the little Greek town that was the island's capital; its 700 pieces of artillery were said to have a firing range reaching to the Albanian coast. However he was astonished to find that the Turks had been able to lay waste the island, under its very walls, the previous year, with 500 horsemen.[82] It is less astonishing if one reads further in the 1553 document, which is the report of a *bailo* on his appointment to Corfu. All the expense would be wasted, he said, if the fortifications of the old fortress were not brought up to date with modern methods of siege and warfare. Work had hardly begun on this, and what there was was ineffective, in spite of the 200,000 ducats that had been spent on it. When was it to be completed? Not very soon, apparently, since a report made in 1576[83] was still complaining about the inadequacy of the fortress. The enemy, without 'putting hand to

[76] E. Albèri, *Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti*, II, V, p. 465.
[77] B.N. Paris, Fr. 16,104.
[78] On the lack of ports of the west coast, *Instructions nautiques*, no. 408, p. 32.
[79] A.d.S. Venice, Senato Mar, 15, f° 2.
[80] On Venice's determination to fortify Corfu because of the threat from the Turks: bishop of Dax to the king, Venice, 29th July and 12th August, 1559, E. Charrière, *op. cit.*, II, p. 599–600.
[81] V. Lamansky, *op. cit.*, p. 610–611.
[82] P. Canaye, *op. cit.*, p. 190–192, year 1573.
[83] V. Lamansky, *op. cit.*, p. 611.

sword' could come and set up his artillery right on the counterscarp! Similar complaints flood from the pens of Venetian officials throughout the second half of the century: the impressive defences installed by the Signoria are out of date, incapable of preventing pirate raids; the mountains have no water, so cannot serve as a refuge, and the unfortunate population of Corfu has to take shelter as best it can in the fortress and even in the trenches, at risk of its life; the Turks are free to invade the deserted countryside and abandoned villages. The result was that Corfu, which had 40,000 inhabitants before the 'war of 1537', had only 19,000 in 1588.[84] It is true that Venice relied principally for the island's defence on her galleons with their gilded prows that patrolled the Archipelago and the 'Gulf'.

In fact, with Corfu and her fleet, Venice controlled the entrance to the Adriatic and indeed the entire Adriatic. For the key position at the northern end of the sea was the city itself: the meeting point of sea routes and the continental land routes that in spite of the Alps linked central Europe with the Adriatic and the Levant. Venice's mission was to provide this link.

So she was Queen of the Adriatic, of her 'gulf' as she called it. She would seize any ship when she pleased and police the sea with skill or brutality, depending on the circumstances. Trieste was an annoyance, so she demolished its saltworks in 1578.[85] Ragusa was an annoyance, so she sent galleys into the waters of Ragusa Vecchia to pounce upon the grain ships supplying the city; she incited the allies of the Holy League against the city in 1571; in 1602 she gave support to the rebel Ragusan subjects on the island of Lagosta, famous for its fishing;[86] she was still taking her rival's ships in 1629.[87] Ancona was an annoyance, so she tried to wage a tariff war against her.[88] Ferrara was an annoyance, so she contemplated seizing the port. The Turks were an annoyance; she did not hesitate to attack them whenever she could do so without too much risk.[89]

[84] Correr, D. delle Rose 21, f° 29.
[85] Felice Toffoli, 'Del commercio de Veneziani ai tempi della Repubblica, con accenni a Trieste', 1867, p. 24, extract from *Osservatore Triestino*, May, 1867.
[86] Serafino Razzi, *La storia di Raugia*, 1595, ed. 1803, p. 260.
[87] A.d.S. Venezia, *Cinque Savii alla Mercanzia*, Busta 4, copy (extracts from the history of Gio. Batta Nani). There had been countless previous incidents. Cf. the letter from the Rector of Ragusa to the Ragusan consul at Venice (16th January, 1567) on the subject of goods seized by the Count of Corzola who wanted to be paid a 10 per cent customs duty (Archives, Ragusa L.P., I, f° 34, A.d.S. Venice, *Cinque Savii*, Busta 3 copy, 10th August, 1597).
[88] Venice, *Cinque Savii alla Mercanzia*, Busta 3, the Five Wise Men to the Doge, 29th December, 1634, copy. The opposition to Ancona and its leather trade took the form of abolishing customs duties (between 1545 and 1572) on gall-nuts coming from Upper and Lower Romania.
[89] In 1559, there was a serious incident at Durazzo: the *provveditore* Pandolfo Contarini pursued some Turkish corsairs who took refuge in Durazzo; the Venetian bombarded the town. Cf. Campagna, *La vita del catholico . . . Filippo II*, 1605, II, XI, p. 82–83, and the bishop of the Dax to the king, 30th April and 20th May, 1559, E. Charriere, *op. cit.*, II, p. 573–575. In 1560 this time peacefully, she made the Turks give up 'trente et trois cazalz' which they had usurped near Sebenico (Dolu to the bishop of Dax, Constantinople, 21st September 1560, E. Charrière, *op. cit.*, II, 625–628).

The golden rule, the 'ben noto principio', is quite explicit as laid down by the *Cinque Savii alla Mercanzia:* 'ogni merce che entra nell' Adriatico o esce dall' Adriatico deve toccar Venezia', all goods carried in the Adriatic must pass through Venice,[90] according to a typically urban policy of authoritarian concentration of trade.[91] Only the Signoria had the right to grant exemptions if she saw fit, and she rarely saw fit.[92] For her it was a way of regulating traffic according to what she judged to be her interests, to defend her fiscal system, her markets, her export outlets, her artisans, and her shipping. Every action, even the apparently trivial seizure of two small boats from Trieste carrying iron,[93] was part of an overall calculated policy. In 1518, in order to ensure her monopoly, Venice insisted that merchant vessels could not leave Crete, Napoli di Romania, Corfu, or Dalmatia without leaving a deposit guaranteeing that their merchandise would be brought to Venice. On paper this looked foolproof. But Istria had been omitted from the ruling, and the breach was sufficient to ensure the free passage of inferior quality textiles – *rasse, sarze, grisi* – made in Istria and Dalmatia, which were sold in large quantities at the Recanati fair.[94] So we know that in this game of cops and robbers, there was opposition from skilful smugglers on the sea as well as on the overland and river routes; between Venice and Ferrara a contraband trade was carried on that all the controls were powerless to prevent. Venice's smaller neighbours were obliged to submit to her conditions, but whenever possible they resorted to trickery.

As for her more powerful neighbours, they raised their voices and invoked counter principles. The Spaniards had quarrels of precedence with the Republic and frequent disputes about captured vessels. 'For many years now this Signoria of Venice has claimed without any foundation that the gulf belongs to her', wrote Francisco de Vera, Philip II's ambassador at Venice, 'as if God had not created this part of the sea, like the rest, for the use of all'.[95] The Venetians never tired of replying that they had bought the Adriatic not with their gold but with their blood, 'spilt so generously'.

The Signoria was evidently unable to prevent her larger neighbours from opening doors and windows on to the Adriatic and using them.

[90] A.d.S. Venice, *Cinque Savii* 9, f° 175.

[91] This policy is quite clear regarding the salt works of the Adriatic which were almost all under Venice's thumb; or even salt imported from further away. It was doubtless a necessary policy: in 1583–85, for three years, Venice's maritime export trade was worth 1,600,000 ducats 'dentro del colfo fin a Corfu' and 600,000 outside it (A.d.S. Venice, Papadopoli, codice 12, f° 22 v°.) This figure comes from a contemporary source and is based on the 'datio della uscita' of 5 per cent on merchandise. On salt, which was in effect a supplementary form of currency in the Adriatic, cf. Fernand Braudel, 'Achats et ventes de sel à Venise (1587–1793) in *Annales E.S.C.* 1961, p. 961–965, and the accompanying map. Through the salt, Venice had the custom of the Balkan stock-farmers.

[92] A.d.S. Venice, *Cinque Savii*, 13th May, 1514: permission to load and transport directly to Alexandria in Egypt, oils, almonds, walnuts, and chestnuts.

[93] A.d.S. Venice, *Senato Mar*, 186, 6th March, 1610.

[94] *Ibid.*, 19th and 20th June, 1520.

[95] Francisco de Vera to Philip II, 7th October, 1589, A.N. K 1674.

The Turks were at Valona in 1559, the Spanish in Naples; the Papacy at Ancona and later at Ferrara in 1598 and Urbino in 1631; the House of Austria was at Trieste. From 1570 Maximilian II was talking of asking Venice for 'negotium liberae navigationis'.[96] This was an old demand previously formulated by the Papacy. In the turmoil preceding the battle of Agnadello, Julius II had proposed, in February, 1509, to absolve the Venetians if they would grant free shipping rights in the Adriatic to all subjects of the Church,[97] and the same claims were untiringly advanced afterwards.

Finally there was Ragusa with her fleet of merchantmen. The tenacious republic of St. Blaise played on its double status as protegée of the Papacy and vassal of the Sultan. This neutral position was useful: in a hostile Mediterranean, Ragusan ships almost always passed unharmed. So Venice had Ancona and Ragusa for the present and Trieste for the distant future as enemies whom she could not afford to ignore. The two former took advantage of Venice's difficulties at the beginning of the century during the pepper and spice crisis. But Venice survived the crisis. And in any case her rivals were obliged to her for marine insurance, cash remittances, and transport. They often acted as her servants and could cause her little inconvenience except on short voyages from one side of the Adriatic to the other. This was minor traffic: iron from Trieste taken to be sold in Italy, western textiles, wool and wine from Apulia taken to Dalmatia without passing through Venice. The Venetian authorities tried to punish subjects of the Signoria who dealt in this 'black market'. But since they frequently reiterated threats and punishments, it appears that these were neither very effective nor dictated by extreme necessity.[98]

After all these were only routine police actions. Venice was not only on the lookout for smugglers and rivals; she was also on her guard against corsairs attracted by the very abundance of trade in the Adriatic: wheat, wine with high alcohol content, oil from Apulia and Romagna, meat, cheese from Dalmatia, not to mention the ships carrying the rich long-distance exports and imports of the Signoria. Against these pirates Venice waged a sporadic but never-ending war: driven from one area, the corsairs would reappear with monotonous and obstinate regularity in another.

[96] The Emperor to Dietrichstein, 2nd May, 1570, P. Herre, *Europäische Politik im cyprischen Krieg 1570–73* 1902, p. 148; on the quarrels and negotiations between Vienna and Venice, see G. Turba, *op. cit.*, XII, p. 177 note (23rd November, 1550) XIII, p. 148 (9th June, 1560). Germany 'did not have free passage through the Adriatic until the reign of Charles VI' cf. Krebs, *art. cit.*, p. 377–378, and J. Kulischer, *Allgemeine Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, 1928–1929, II, 236–7.

[97] A. Le Glay, *Négociations diplomatiques entre la France et l'Autriche durant les trente premières années du XVIe siècle*, I, 1845, p. 232.

[98] E.g. A.d.S. Venice, *Cinque Savii*, 2, 26th February, 1536, when Venetian ships carrying goods loaded in the Levant for Venetians and foreigners which often went to unload directly at the towns of the *Sottovento*, were formally forbidden to do so. On Apulian wines transported to Dalmatia, cf. the report of Giustiniano, 1576, B.N. Paris, Ital. 220 f° 72, copy. And as early as 5th October, 1408 there was a formal prohibition on exporting grain outside the 'gulf' (*Cinque Savii* 2).

The fifteenth century had seen the last glorious years of Catalan privateering, based on Sicily. Venice had learned to arm a few big merchantmen against this if necessary, and to hunt down or at least neutralize the enemy. Retrospectively this privateering with big ships seems more spectacular than dangerous.[99]

Turkish piracy was on the increase in the sixteenth century;[100] it entered the Adriatic through the Albanian ports of Stapola, Valona, and Durazzo. It became a serious threat with the appearance of the Barbary corsairs[101] and even more so with the arrival of Turkish armadas, preceded and followed by pirate ships. However we should not exaggerate this threat. On the whole, until the last quarter of the sixteenth century, Turks and Barbaresques made few incursions into the 'gulf' itself.[102] It was not until after 1580 that there was a definite change in the Adriatic as elsewhere. A Venetian report of 1583 describes this change: for some time, and particularly since the Apulian coast has been fortified with watchtowers whose artillery is capable of protecting both the coast and boats seeking the shelter of their cannons, the corsairs have taken to carrying out their raids further north and have invaded the gulf. They have been making short and frequent attacks and thus escaping the notice of the galleys.[103]

To these hazards another, much worse, was gradually added. It had appeared before the middle of the century:[104] this was the constant piracy of the Uskoks of Segna and Fiume. These towns, a rendezvous for Albanian and Slav adventurers, were only a stone's throw from Venice and her rich flow of traffic. These lightweight enemies were few in number it is true, about a thousand men, says the *provveditore* Bembo in 1598;[105] 400 of them were in the pay of the Emperor and 600 'sono li venturieri che altro non fano che corseggiare et del bottino vivono'. A handful of men, but they were protected by the Emperor and were continually reinforced by the arrival of Balkan outlaws, 'per lo più del paese del Turco'. In any case there was little the Venetian ships could do against these tiny boats rowed at high speed, so light that they could use the shallowest channels between the islands where the galleys dared not follow them for fear of running aground. Such robbers were practically immune from any

[99] Numerous references, e.g. A.d.S. Venice, Senato Terra 4, f° 123 v°, f° 124, 27th September, 1459; Senato Mar 6, f° 89 v°, 28th September, 1459. For Genoese piracy too, see Senato Mar 6, f° 196 v°, 16th June, 1460.

[100] For one of the first appearances of the Turkish corsairs, A.d.S. Venice, Senato Mar 18, f°, 119 v°, 9th September, 1516; it was the corsair *Curthogoli* with 12 to 15 sails at the entrance of the gulf.

[101] In 1553 as the result of a false manoeuvre, two Venetian galleys fell into the hands of 12 Barbary galliots off Valona, Giuseppe Cappelleti, *Storia della Repubblica di Venezia del suo principio al suo fine*, Venice, vol. VIII, 1852, p. 199.

[102] But it had been getting worse since 1570, Museo Correr, D. della Rose, 481, 1st October, 1570: the corsairs got away with 76,000 ducats worth of wine and oil.

[103] *V. Lamansky, op. cit.*, p. 600–601.

[104] Giacomo Tebaldi to the Duke of Ferrara, Venice, 28th March, 1545. A.d.S. Modena, Venezia XXIV, 2383/72 '*Quelli diavoli Scochi hano preso certi navilli richi et impicato tutti quelli v'erano dentro, com'intesero ch'erano venetiani*'.

[105] Correr, D. delle Rose, 21, f° 78.

pursuer. It would be easier, says a Venetian senator, to stop the birds flying through the air with one's hands than to stop the Uskoks on the sea with galleys.[106] If one of the latter should fall into a big ambush (600 men) it was lost; this was what happened on 17th May, 1587, at the mouth of the Narenta (Neretva).[107] If a ship ran aground it fell a prey to them.

Encouraged by their success, these *diavoli*, these robbers, these 'persone . . . uniti per rubbare', as the Venetians called them, held nothing sacred. Everything was fair game to them. Even the Turks threatened massive reprisals. Even Ragusa was to take up arms against them one day. Venice lost her temper, blockaded Fiume or Segna, sometimes even burning 'the mill-wheels' and 'hanging the captains'. But these actions had little effect. The city behind this adventure was neither Segna nor Fiume (the latter only briefly tried to commercialize the products of piracy but without success) but Trieste, the great centre for selling and reselling, whether Turkish slaves whom the Grand Duke of Tuscany bought for his galleys, or fine cloths of gold and camlets stolen from the Venetians. As an enemy Trieste was formidable. Behind her lay the archdukes, the Habsburgs of Vienna and indirectly of Spain. Italian and Venetian merchants travelled to Carniola and Croatia and to Styria in vain. The trade of the hinterland fell increasingly into the hands of the growing community of travelling peasant merchants and pedlars, who were in touch with the privateers and external commerce. It was against this multiple threat that Venice sought to maintain her privileges. She could hardly do so without difficulty, compromises, and surprises.

All these characteristics and the others from which one could easily compile a book on the Adriatic are a testimony and proof of the unity of the 'gulf', a unity that was as much cultural and economic as it was political, and whose predominant flavour was Italian. The gulf was Venetian, of course, but in the sixteenth century it was more than this, it was the sphere of a triumphant Italian culture. The civilization of the peninsula wove a brilliant, concentrated web along the east coast of the sea. This is not to suggest that Dalmatia was 'Italian' in the sense that apologists of racial expansion would have understood it. The entire seacoast of the *Retroterra* is today inhabited by a Slav population.[108] And so it was in the sixteenth century in spite of superficial appearances. At Ragusa at the time, Italianism was a commodity: Italian was the commercial language of the entire Mediterranean. But fashion and snobbery entered

[106] Correr Cigogna, 1999 (undated).

[107] A.d.S. Venice, Papadopoli 12, f° 25.

[108] Cf. the evidence of, among many others, H. Hochholzer, *art. cit.*, p. 150. While we may discount the exaggerations in Attilio Tamaro's *L'Adriatico golfo d'Italia*, 1915, the value and talent of his studies 'Documenti inediti di storia triestina, 1298–1544' in *Archeografo triestino*, XLIV, 1931, and *Storia di Trieste*, 2 vols, Rome, 1924 should be acknowledged. Some interesting points are touched on by Bozzo Baldi, *L'isola di Cherzo*, pref. R. Almagià, fasc. 3, Studi geografici pubblicati dal Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, 1934; the bases of Italianism on the island were both social and economic: large estates and shipping.

into it as well. Not only was it considered desirable that the sons of noble families should go to study at Padua, and that the secretaries of the republic should be as fluent in Italian as in Latin (the archives of Ragusa are almost all in Italian), but the ruling families, who governed trade and politics, unhesitatingly invented Italian genealogies for themselves. In fact, of course, these haughty *gentes* were descended from some mountain Slav, the Italianized names betray their Slavonic origins, the coastal population continued to be drawn from the mountains, Slavonic was the spoken language, the familiar tongue of the women and the people, and even, after all, of the elite, since the registers of Ragusa frequently record strict orders to speak only Italian at the assemblies of the Rectors; if an order was necessary, clearly Slavonic was being spoken.

On the basis of this knowledge it is certain that the Adriatic of the sixteenth century was attracted by the sophisticated civilization of the nearby Peninsula, and drawn into its orbit. Ragusa was a town of Italian art; Michelozzo worked on the Palace of the Rectors. And yet of the towns of the *altra sponda*, it was the one least influenced by Venice, since except for a brief period it had always been independent. At Zara, Spalato, the island of Cherso and elsewhere, abundant documents record the names of schoolmasters, priests, notaries, businessmen, and even Jews who had come from the Peninsula, ambassadors and architects of the Italian civilization that was grafted on to this region.[109]

But the Adriatic was not exclusively Italian. Strictly speaking it is not orientated north–south but north-west and south-east; it was the route to the Levant, with long-established trade and relations, open too as we shall see to the illnesses and epidemics of the East. Its civilization was profoundly complex. Here eastern influence could already be felt and Byzantium lived on; elements which combined to give this frontier zone its own originality. Its Catholicism was a fighting religion, faced with the threatening Orthodox world up in the mountains and with the immense Turkish peril. If, in spite of this mixed experience, Dalmatia remained loyal to Venice, as Lamansky noted long ago, it was because its loyalty lay basically beyond the Signoria, with Rome and the Catholic Church. Even a town like Ragusa, so awake to her own interests, firmly embedded in both the Orthodox and the Turkish world, surrounded that is by heretics and heathen, was remarkable for her fervent Catholicism. Her religious foundations would be as fascinating to investigate as her economic structure; interest played a part – and why not? – in some of her greatest religious outbursts. Her loyalty to Rome protected her on her threatened frontier, as was shown during the terrible crisis of 1571. And with the great economic withdrawal of the seventeenth century, after the splendours of a Renaissance which like those of Venice and Bologna, developed late, her sons found magnificent careers in the Church, travelling all over the

[109] Antonio Teja, 'Trieste e l'Istria negli atti dei notai zaratini del 300' in *Annali del R. Ist. Tech. Rismondo*, 1935; Silvio Mitis, *Il governo della repubblica veneta nell'isola di Cherzo*, 1893, p. 27.

Christian world, even to France, merchants and bankers of the old days turned princes and servants of the Church.

Geography, politics, economics, civilization, and religion all combined to make the Adriatic a homogeneous world, extending beyond the coasts of the sea and into the Balkan continent to the final frontier between Latin and Greek worlds. On the other side, to the west it was responsible for a subtle dividing line along the Italian peninsula. We are usually only conscious of the very marked opposition between northern and southern Italy. But the east–west division between Tyrrhenian and Levantine Italy, while less obvious, is no less real. Throughout the past it has acted as a hidden force. For a long time the east took the lead over the west of the peninsula; but it was the west, Florence and Rome, that produced the Renaissance, which would only reach Ferrara, Parma, Bologna, and Venice with the end of the sixteenth century. Economic advance followed a similar pendulum movement: When Venice was in decline, Genoa's fortunes rose; later Leghorn was to become the leading town of the peninsula. These swings from east to west, Adriatic to Tyrrhenian, were to determine the fate of Italy and of the whole Mediterranean on either side of the peninsula which acted as the beam of an enormous balance.

East and west of Sicily. The narrow seas are the active parts of the Mediterranean, teeming with ships and boats. But the vast empty stretches of water, the solitary wastes, are also part of the general structure of the sea.

In the sixteenth century the Mediterranean, which is so small by present-day standards of travel, contained enormous, dangerous and forbidden stretches, no-man's-lands separating different worlds. The Ionian Sea is the largest of these hostile areas, prolonging over the sea the desert of Libya and thus creating a double zone of emptiness, maritime and continental, separating East from West.[110]

On the other side of the channel of Sicily another wide sea stretches from the Sicilian and Sardinian shores to the Balearics, Spain, and the Maghreb. This sea, which we might call the Sardinian Sea, is also difficult to cross with its inhospitable coasts and sudden blasts from the *noroît* and the *levante*. The east–west passage bristles with obstacles.

It is true that some of the earliest ships had overcome these obstacles and linked East with West; in the North, travelling from east to west and vice versa, they kept close to the Balkan coastline and the Neapolitan shore, using the Straits of Messina in preference to the Sicilian Channel, which was a more risky route. This was the Christian shipping route. The Islamic route, less convenient and less frequented, passed diagonally through the Sicilian Channel. This was the path taken by the Turkish armadas, from the Albanian coast to Valona, from Valona to the shores of Naples and Sicily, and from Sicily to Bizerta or sometimes as far as Algiers. It was never as busy as the first.

[110] A. Philippson, 'Das byzantinische Reich als geographische Erscheinung' in *Geogr. Zeitschr.*, 1934, p. 441–455.

To the south the obstacle was avoided by following the African coast, which, since there are reports of Christian privateers, must have been quite a busy area for shipping.[111] The pirates' best course was to appear from the open sea and surprise ships coming from Egypt, Tripoli, Djerba, and sometimes from Algiers. At the beginning of the sixteenth century Venetian galleys were still operating the *muda* of the Barbary coast, which they reached by way of the coast of Sicily. At the end of the century, English and Dutch ships in their turn followed the coast of North Africa from Gibraltar to the Sicilian Channel, which they too crossed diagonally to reach the Sicilian coast and then the Greek coasts on the way to Crete, the Archipelago, and Syria. This was doubtless to avoid Spanish inspections at the Straits of Messina.

All these itineraries went the long way round the Ionian Sea and the Sea of Sardinia and avoided crossing them. They constituted the chief link between the eastern and western Mediterranean, or if one prefers between East and West, and are of capital importance to history. Alongside them we should take account of the overland traffic across Italy. The peninsula acted as a channel between two arms of the sea. Ancona and Ferrara were linked with Florence, Leghorn, and Genoa. Venice exported goods to Genoa and the Tyrrhenian. To the traffic passing through Messina and the Sicilian Channel must be added what was carried from one coast of Italy to the other by the unending flow of mule trains. This additional traffic would not of course look very significant to us either in volume or value if exact statistics could be obtained. But in the sixteenth century it was decisive. It contributes to the unity of the Mediterranean region and of this book. What kind of unity is it?

Two maritime worlds. To claim that the considerable obstacles between the two halves of the Mediterranean effectively separated them from each other would be to profess a form of geographical determinism, extreme, but not altogether mistaken. It is true that the waves of human emigration from one side of the sea to the other were constantly brought face to face with the difficulties of both overland and maritime routes. General Brémond, in a book which has something of the verve of Émile-Félix Gautier, has pointed out that the Arab invasions from the seventh to the eleventh century did not significantly alter North Africa in human terms, that the invaders were few in number and therefore the more easily absorbed. This is a transposition of Hans Delbrück's thesis of the Germanic invasions of the fifth century, but let that pass: what interests us is the obstacle nature has placed in the path of human migrations from east to west or west to east, whether by land or sea. It is as if they came up against a finely meshed filter.

There were of course in the sixteenth century natives of the Levant

[111] Instructions of Pandolfo Strozzi to the general of the galleys sent out on a pirate raid, Leghorn, 1st April, 1575, A.d.S. Florence, Mediceo 2077, f° 540 and v°. The raid was to take the following route: Messina, Cape Passero, Cape Misurata, for near the latter African cape passed the ships travelling from the Levant to Tripoli, Tunis, Bône, and Algiers.

living on western shores: Greeks at Leghorn, Cypriots in the Balearics and Cadiz, Ragusans in all the big ports, Levantines and Asians in Algiers. The Barbarossas and the janissaries of Algiers came from the Aegean and Asia Minor.[112] Conversely, traces of Latin colonization have survived in the East, and the legion of renegades even more than the counting houses of the merchants led to a fresh colonization of the Turkish world. But these minor grafts were of little real importance. The two halves of the sea, in spite of trading links and cultural exchanges, maintained their autonomy and their own spheres of influence. Genuine intermingling of populations was to be found only inside each region, and within these limits it defied all barriers of race, culture, or religion.

All human links between different ends of the Mediterranean, by contrast, remained an adventure or at least a gamble.

For example, the Phoenicians long ago settled in Carthage and from there extended their influence westwards triumphing over the long distances of the Mediterranean far west with their great ships. And the Ancient Greeks landed at Marseilles, which they too used as a base for expeditions. Similarly, the Byzantines for a while controlled Sicily, Italy, North Africa, and Baetica. The Arabs in the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries seized North Africa, Spain, and Sicily. All these great victories were either short-lived or followed by the severing of connections between the advance parties and the country of origin: this was the fate of Marseilles, Carthage, and even of Moslem Spain which in the tenth and eleventh centuries received all its cultural nourishment from the East, its poets, doctors, professors, philosophers, magicians, and even its red-skirted dancers. Then it was cut off from the source and, thrown together with Berber Africa, began to evolve a western way of life. The men of the Maghreb who then travelled to the east, either as pilgrims or to study, were astonished to find themselves 'almost in a foreign world'. 'There is no Islam in the East,' exclaims one of them.[113] This history was to repeat itself at the end of the sixteenth century, when the Africa of the Turkish Regencies freed itself from the Ottoman hand.

It is confirmed in the opposite direction by the symmetrical history of the Crusades and the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem. There is no need to labour the point.

The double lesson of the Turkish and Spanish Empires. Each sea tends to live off itself, to organize the shipping circuits of its sailing vessels and small

[112] On migrations from one basin of the sea to the other, cf. two Greeks condemned in the auto-da-fé of Murcia on 14th May, 1554 (A.H.N. Lo. 2796). Greeks travelling to Madrid (Terranova to H.M., Palermo, 20th December, 1572, Simancas E° 1137). Numerous documents on Greeks at Leghorn on the sixteenth century. A Greek from Cadiz was taken prisoner by the Turks of Algiers in 1574, D. de Haëdo, *op. cit.*, p. 175 v°. A Cypriot at Majorca, 19th February, 1589, Riba y Garcia, *El consejo supremo de Aragon en el reinado de Felipe II*, 1914, p. 285. Greeks serving in the Spanish navy: Tiepolo to the Doge, 19th August, 1560, *Calendar of State Papers* (*Venetian*) VII, 247.

[113] J. Sauvaget, *Introduction à l'histoire de l'Orient musulman*, 1943, p. 43–44.

boats into an autonomous system. This was also true of the two great basins of the Mediterranean, east and west. They communicated and had links with each other but tended to organize themselves into closed circuits, notwithstanding a certain number of contacts, alliances, and relations of interdependence.

This is underlined only too clearly by sixteenth-century politics. What a marvellous geopolitical map one could draw of the western half of the Mediterranean between the middle of the fifteenth and the middle of the sixteenth century, with arrows showing the old and new directions of Spanish imperialism, the positions it seized and exploited in order to gain control of the western sea. For it did gain control. And after 1559, with the demobilization of the French fleet and the loosening of ties between the French king and the Sultan, the western sea became incontestably Spanish. The Moslems only held one coast, and that not the best, North Africa. They only held it by virtue of the corsairs, and their authority, kept in check by the defensive line of Spanish *presidios*, was constantly threatened from within and without. In 1535 Charles V was victorious against Tunis; in 1541 he was defeated, but only just, before Algiers; this setback could be rectified. At Madrid the *Consejo de Guerra* had permanently on its files a plan for attacking the city of the *re'is*, which, one day, might be suddenly put into execution. It very nearly was in the time of Don John of Austria and again in 1601 with the surprise attempt by Gian Andrea Doria.

The Ionian Sea, the 'Sea of Crete', was by contrast the Ottoman sea. The Turks, masters of the coasts of the eastern Mediterranean after the occupation of Syria in 1516 and Egypt in 1517, found it necessary to gain control of the sea by creating a strong armed fleet.

These two different Mediterraneans were vehicles, one might almost say they were responsible for the twin empires. Zinkeisen has said as much of Turkey. Is it not also true of Spain?[114] The two halves of the Mediterranean were in the sixteenth century two political zones under different banners. Is it therefore surprising that the great sea battles in the time of Ferdinand, Charles V, Sulaimān, and Philip II should repeatedly have taken place at the meeting point of the two seas, in the frontier zones? – Tripoli (1511, 1551), Djerba (1510, 1520, 1560), Tunis (1535, 1573, 1574), Bizerta (1573, 1574), Malta (1565), Lepanto (1571), Modon (1572), Coron (1534), Prevesa (1538).

[114] The aim of Ferdinand the Catholic in 1509–11, at the time of the great expeditions of Pedro Navarro, was not merely to put out of action the pirate ports of the Maghreb, or to open the way for a new war of Granada of which Africa would be the prize (Isabella and not he, had foreseen and dreamed of that.) It was above all to set up a shipping route with coastal bases from southern Spain to Sicily which was rich in grain. Oran was taken in 1509, and the Spanish Armada was already taking Tripoli in Barbary in 1511. The speed with which it was accomplished indicates the object of his mission (Fernand Braudel, 'Les Espagnols et l'Afrique du Nord', in *Revue Africaine*, 1928). Lucien Romier thought there was a similar intention to be detected in Charles V's campaign against Provence.

Politics merely followed the outline of an underlying reality. These two Mediterraneans, commanded by warring rulers, were physically, economically, and culturally different from each other. Each was a separate historical zone. Physically the East had a more continental climate, with sharper extremes, worse droughts than the West, higher summer temperatures and therefore if that is possible more bare and desert lands (*fauves* as Théophile Gautier would have said). Its maritime regions were correspondingly more animated. The prominent role played in communications by the Aegan Sea deserves mention. It is worth emphasizing the ease of navigation in the East, particularly since it seems to be little known. A document of 1559 is quite explicit. An adviser wanted the Republic of St. Mark to fit out a certain number of galleys at Cyprus as in the other Venetian islands. There would then be no difficulty in having them cross over to Crete: the crossing could be made before St. Gregory's day (12th March), the traditional date of the sortie of the guard at Alexandria and Rhodes. For, he says, 'li boni tempi usano in quelle parte più a bon hora che in queste', the good weather begins earlier there than here.[115] Could this be the reason for the advance that the Turkish fleet always seemed to have over its rivals? Should the swiftness of its attacks be attributed to the early fine weather in the Aegean? In a period when the rhythm of the seasons determined that of war, this could be important.

Beyond politics. The economic and cultural differences between the two zones became increasingly marked in the sixteenth century, while their respective positions were being reversed. Since the thirteenth century the East had gradually lost one by one her supremacy in various fields: the refinements of material civilization, technical advance, large industry, banking, and the supply of gold and silver. The sixteenth century saw her final defeat, in the course of an unprecedented economic upheaval when the opening up of the Atlantic destroyed the age-old privilege of the Levant, which for a time had been the sole repository of the riches of the 'Indies'. From that point on, every day saw a widening of the gap between the standard of living of the West, which was going through a revolution in technical and industrial progress, and the eastern world of low-cost living, where money coming from the West would automatically rise in value and acquire higher purchasing power.

But this difference in level in a way recreated the economic unity of the two seas, indeed it made it absolutely necessary, overcoming all barriers, including political ones, and using any means, including piracy. Differences in voltage determine electrical currents; the greater the difference, the greater the need for currents. For the easterners, it was essential to be associated with the superiority of the West, to share in its wealth whatever the price: from the West they wanted precious metals, in other words American silver, and they were obliged to follow the progress of European

[115] V. Lamansky, *Secrets d'État de Venise*, St. Petersburg, 1884, p. 563–564, Venetian report of 1559.

technical advance. In return, developing western industry had to find markets for its surplus production. These are big questions and we shall come back to them later. For it was the interaction of such pressing needs, such disturbances and restorations of economic balance, such necessary exchanges, which guided and indirectly determined the course of Mediterranean history.[116]

2. MAINLAND COASTLINES

The Mediterranean has always seemed the chosen country of seafarers. This has been said time and time again, as if a coastline had only to be irregular in order to be populated, and populated by sailors. In fact, the Mediterranean has never been inhabited by the profusion of sea-going peoples found in the northern seas and the Atlantic. It has only produced them in small numbers and in certain regions.

The peoples of the sea. This was bound to be the case, since it could not support more. The Mediterranean waters are hardly more productive than the lands. The much vaunted *frutti di mare* are only moderately abundant,[117] its fisheries provide only a modest yield, except in such rare spots as the lagoons of Comachio, the coasts of Tunis and of Andalusia (where there is tunny fishing).[118] The Mediterranean which is a deep sea, formed by geological collapse, has no shallow shelves, no continental platforms where submarine life could thrive down to a depth of 200 metres. Almost everywhere a narrow ridge of rocks or sand leads straight from the shore to the deep gulfs of the open sea. The water of the Mediterranean, which is geologically too old, is apparently, according to oceanographers, biologically exhausted.[119] There are no long-distance fishing fleets except for coral, which is not for consumption. There is nothing here comparable to the long journeys of northern trawlers towards Newfoundland and Iceland or the North Sea fishing grounds. In February, 1605,

[116] On the great East-West contrast during the ancient Roman period – which confirms my argument – see G. I. Bratianu, *Études byzantines*, 1939, p. 59–60, 82–83. Jacques Pirenne, *Les grands courants de l'histoire universelle*, 1944, I, p. 313. Pierre Waltz, *La Question d'Orient dans l'Antiquité*, 1943, p. 282.

[117] R. Pfalz, *art. cit.*, p. 130, n.1. notes that in 1928, 10,280 quintals of fish were caught off the Genoese coast while the town needed 20,000 quintals. The Italian fisherman's earnings are a quarter those of a French fisherman and an eighth of those of an English fisherman and yet fish is no dearer in France or England than in Italy.

[118] On tunny fishing see Philip II to the Duke of Alva, 4th May, 1580, (*CODOIN*, XXXIV, p. 455) 19th May, 1580, (*ibid.*, p. 430) 18th April, (*ibid.*, XXXII, p. 108), A. de Morales, *Las antigüedades de las ciudades de España*, Madrid, 1792, f° 41 v° says that in 1584 tunny fishing brought into Andalusia 70,000 ducats to the Dukes of Medina Sidonia and Arcos. With picturesque details: at the time of the catch, '*tocase a tambores y hazese gente para yr a su tiempo a esta pesqueria con el atruendo y ruydo que se aparaja una guerra.*' Fishing at Conil from May to June, the sea is red with blood. Pedro de Medina, *Libro de grandezas y cosas memorables de España*, enlarged edition by D. Perez de Messa, 1595, p. 108.

[119] E. le Danois, *op. cit.*, p. 197–198.

when there was a shortage of fish, the Signoria of Genoa tried to limit consumption during Lent.[120]

The scarcity of fish explains the scarcity of fishermen and consequently that of sailors, which always acted as an unseen brake on the grand projects of Mediterranean powers. Between political dreams and reality there always lay this obstacle: the shortage of men capable of building, equipping, and handling the fleets. It is to this that we can attribute the difficult rise of Leghorn. It took a lifelong effort, that of Cosimo de' Medici to provide the new port with the sailors she needed, and he had to search for them all over the Mediterranean. A whole set of circumstances had to be united before the Turks could build their fleet, or the corsairs establish their base at Algiers. Equipping the galleys of all the armadas that were fighting in the Mediterranean was above all a problem of manpower. If it had not been for the slaves, prisoners of war, and convicts brought from their cells and chained to the oars, how could enough oarsmen have been found for the galleys? From the middle of the century on documents complain of the shortage of volunteers for the galleys, the *buonavoglia*; times are not hard enough for men to come forward and sell themselves as they used to, argues a Venetian admiral, Cristoforo da Canal in 1541.[121] Venice even had to introduce a militia system of compulsory service in her Cretan galleys, and after 1542–1545 had to use *condannati* in her own galleys. There was not only a shortage of oarsmen; crews were equally hard to come by. The documents stress the incompetence and poor organization of Venice: if this or that was put right, if the pay was better, sailors from Venetian possessions would not leave to go and serve on foreign boats, on the Turkish armadas, or even those of the western sea. This may well be true. What is even more certain is that there were not enough sailors to man all the boats in the Mediterranean; and while they naturally went where conditions were best, no country in the sixteenth century could boast of having more men than it needed.

This is why at the end of the century the Mediterranean states and towns were enlisting or trying to enlist sailors from the North. In 1561 a Scottish Catholic brought a galley into the service of Spain.[122] A document dating from after the Invincible Armada shows Philip II and his advisers actually trying to recruit sailors from England.[123] At Leghorn it was a distinct feature of the policy of Ferdinand de' Medici to call on sailors not only from the Mediterranean but also from northern Europe.[124] Algiers was to follow suit after the end of the sixteenth century.[125]

From the better-equipped North the Mediterranean borrowed not only

[120] Danilo Presotto, *op. cit.*, p. 364.

[121] Alberto Tenenti, *Cristoforo da Canal*, 1962, p. 82.

[122] Letter patent from Philip II, 1st October, 1561, in favour of the Scotsman, Chasteniers, who fitted out a galley against the Infidel, B.N. Paris, Fr. 16103, f^{os} 69 and 69 v°.

[123] A.d.S. Florence, Mediceo (full reference not available).

[124] G. Vivoli, *Annali di Livorno*, IV, p. 10–11.

[125] *Ibid.*, IV, p. 10.

men but new techniques; for example the 'cog', or *Kogge*, a heavy cargo vessel, originally a single-masted square-rigged ship, which could brave the worst winter storms. It was the Basque pirates of Bayonne who first demonstrated its qualities to the Mediterraneans.[126] It became the typical roundship both in the Baltic and the Mediterranean in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In return, the voyage of the *Pierre de la Rochelle* to Danzig some hundred and fifty years later introduced the surprised Danzigers to a new type of ship, the carrack, incontestably a southern invention, derived from the cog but with an increased number of masts and multiple sails – a Mediterranean tradition – combining both square and lateen rig. It was a southern boat, but from the Atlantic regions, for it seems to have been the Biscay shipbuilders who developed it before it became the typical merchantman of the Atlantic and the Mediterranean in about 1485.[127]

It looks as if the Atlantic led the way in developing technical progress in navigation. One champion of northern superiority has gone so far as to claim that the Mediterranean, an inland sea, never developed any types of boat of more than local importance.[128] It was, however, the sailors of the Mediterranean who originally initiated direct and regular shipping between the inland sea and the Atlantic. They led the way in the fourteenth century, but were gradually overtaken as time went on. First of all on the Atlantic part of the trip, if one remembers the important role played in the fifteenth century and even earlier by the sailors of Biscay and their *balaneros*, the Bretons, the Flemish hookers, which monopolized trade between Spain and the Low Countries from 1550. Then on the whole trip from the end of the fifteenth century until 1535, English ships in large numbers appeared in the Mediterranean and after an interruption, began to use the route again permanently in about 1572, preceding the Dutch convoys by a good fifteen years. After this it was inevitable that the Mediterraneans would finally lose, to the sailors from the North and the Atlantic, the struggle for world domination begun at the end of the fifteenth century.

Weaknesses of the maritime regions. If there were relatively few sailors in the Mediterranean it was because the coastal regions that traditionally produce sailors – and by their activity give the illusion of a Mediterranean whose warm waters breed a race of seafaring men – were few in number too: the Dalmatian coast; the Greek coasts and islands; the Syrian coast (but this was in such decline in the sixteenth century that it can be discounted: the correspondence of Venetian *baili* in Constantinople between 1550 and 1560 mentions only one ship from Beirut); the coast of Sicily (especially the west); some parts of the Neapolitan shore; the coast of Cape Corse; and finally the almost adjacent coastal regions of Genoa,

[126] F. C. Lane, *Venetian ships and shipbuilders of the Renaissance*, 1934, p. 37–38.
[127] *Ibid.*, p. 42.
[128] B. Hagedorn, *Die Entwicklung der wichtigsten Schiffstypen*, Berlin, 1914, p. 1–3 and 36; references in F. C. Lane, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

Provence, Catalonia, Valencia, and Andalusia. In all a small portion of the Mediterranean coastline, and of these regions how many could boast the crowded streets and close-packed *campanili* of the Genoese Riviera?[129]

Often the activity of a long seaboard can be accounted for by a few tiny but active ports some distance apart. The island of Mezzo[130] narrow and defenceless, off Ragusa, provided the port with most of the captains for her big merchant vessels. Perasto,[131] at the end of the century, could only claim 4000 men *da fatti* (eligible to bear arms) but 50 ships both large and small. In fact, the *Perastani* were exempt from all taxes in return for policing the long gulf of Cattaro, whose entrance they guarded on behalf of Venice: thanks to them the *golfo* was *sicurissimo de mala gente*. In the kingdom of Naples we may imagine the tireless but inconspicuous activity of a string of small ports, such as Salerno[132] or Amalfi,[133] whose names are famous, or on the Calabrian coast, S. Maffeo del Cilento,[134] Amantea,[135] Viestris,[136] or Peschici.[137] The last-named, a busy shipbuilding centre according to the Neapolitan documents of the *Sommaria*, was rarely idle, since it had the business of the Ragusan boatbuilders. Huge ships were launched from its beaches, one weighing 6000 *salme*, about 750 tons, in July, 1572.[138]

Whether populous or not, these maritime provinces were overwhelmingly situated in the North, along the Mediterranean peninsulas; behind them there generally lay wooded mountains. The southern mountains because of the dry climate were poorly off for forests and therefore for shipyards. The woods near Bougie were an exception. But for them how could there have grown up in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries a navy which was still very active in the time of Ibn Khaldūn? And cannot the decline of the maritime activities of the Syrian coast be attributed to the exhaustion of the forests of Lebanon? In Algiers not only did the sailors come from overseas, but also, in spite of the use made of the forests behind Cherchel, the timber for building the boats; their oars were brought over from Marseilles.

In the case of all the prosperous seaports, we know either from documents (the arsenal accounts among others, when these have survived, as they have in Leghorn and Venice), from tradition, or from treatises on navigation, the source of the wood used for shipbuilding. Ragusa, which

[129] *Instructions Nautiques*, no. 368, p. 66–70; Andrea Navagero, *Il viaggio fatto in Spagna*, 1563, p. 2 (1525): The roads between Genoa and Rapallo were terrible but the countryside was well populated.
[130] V. Lisicar, *Lopud. Eine historische und zeitgenössische Darstellung*, 1932; (Lopud is the island of Mezzo.)
[131] Museo Correr, D. delle Rose, 21, f° 17 (1584) f° 19 (1586) f° 70 v° (1594).
[132] A.d.S. Naples, Sommaria Partium volume 559, f° 158, 9th October, 1567, for example.
[133] *Ibid.*, 532, 5th November, 1551.
[134] *Ibid.*, 560, f° 209, 10th June, 1568.
[135] *Ibid.*, 543, f° 128, 10th January, 1568.
[136] *Ibid.*, 575, f° 40 17th July, 1567.
[137] *Ibid.*, 577, f° 37–39, 10th October, 1568; f° 89–93, 21st January, 1569.
[138] *Ibid.*, 596, f° 193–6, July, 1572.

like Portugal specialized in the construction of merchantmen, took its timber from the oak forests of the Monte Gargano (also known as Sant'Angelo). This is in fact the reason, according to a treatise written in 1607,[139] for the Ragusans' superiority over the Portuguese, who, if they had a Monte Sant'Angelo, would have the finest galleons in the world. The Turkish *caramusalis* were made out of great plane trees, an excellent wood which behaves particularly well in water.[140] Galleys, which were expected to have a long life, required a range of different woods for the different parts of the boat: oak, pine, larch, ash, fir, beech, and walnut.[141] The best oars were apparently made from the wood brought to Narbonne by way of the Aude and its canal.[142] Much could be made of the travelling diary of the Ragusan who crossed southern Italy between April and August, 1601,[143] in search of timber to fell for the construction of a ship; or of the documents concerning permission to fell trees in the forests of Tuscany, first given to and then withdrawn from the Spaniards;[144] or the purchases made by Genoa, again in Tuscany,[145] or by Barcelona at Naples,[146] although Barcelona relied principally on the oaks and pines of the Catalan Pyrenees, which were renowned for galley-building.[147] Or one might search for contracts like the one signed with the *Sommaria* by Pier Loise Summonte, 'fornitore delle galere regie' (built in Naples) – whereby he undertook to convey from Calabria to Naples timber that was to be felled in the forests of Nerticaro, Ursomarso, Altomonte, Sandonato, and Policastrello.[148]

But clearly what matters is the overall situation, not the exceptions. And that situation was one of scarcity of wood as can be deduced from a reading of the Venetian or Spanish documents, of marked deforestation in the western and central Mediterranean region, reported notably in Sicily and Naples (the very place where one of the great shipbuilding efforts for Philip II's navy was centred). Above all there was a shortage of oak, which was used to construct ships' hulls. After the end of the fifteenth century it was becoming rare and Venice passed a series of draconian measures to save what was left of her forests from destruction.[149] The problem became even more pressing for the Signoria in the following century. Although Italy still possessed large reserves, there was a great deal of timber felling throughout the sixteenth century. We know that deforestation advanced quickly: the Monte Sant'Angelo for example was considered a precious exception. The Turks were better off, with the vast

[139] Bartolomeo Crescentio Romano, *Nautica mediterranea . . .*, 1607, p. 4.
[140] *Ibid.*, p. 4. [141] *Ibid.*, p. 7.
[142] Fourquevaux, *Dépêches*, I, p. 12, timber from the forests of Quillan.
[143] Archives of Ragusa, Diversa de Foris X, f° 81 v° ff: Conto di spese di me Biasio Vodopia . . .
[144] A.d.S. Florence, Mediceo 4897 bis., f° 6 and 6 v° 15th January, 1566.
[145] *Ibid.*, 2840, f° 3, 23rd July 1560.
[146] Simancas E° 1056, f° 185, 22nd August, 1568.
[147] *Geografía general de Catalunya*, p. 336.
[148] A.d.S. Naples, Sommaria Partium, 562, f° 83, 10th September, 1567.
[149] F. C. Lane, *op. cit.*, p. 219 ff.

forests of the Black Sea and those of Marmara, in the gulf of Nicomedia (Izmit[150]) almost opposite the arsenal of Constantinople. After Lepanto, Venice made strenuous representations to the Holy League that all the experienced seamen among the Turkish prisoners be put to death, in spite of the handsome sum of money they represented. For, she said, being short of neither timber nor money, the Turk would have no difficulty in building more ships as long as he could 'rihaver li homini'.[151] Only men were indispensable.

Mediterranean sea powers gradually began to look elsewhere for what their own forests could not provide. In the sixteenth century northern timber was arriving in Seville in boatloads of planks and beams. For the building of the Invincible Armada, Philip II tried to buy, or at any rate had marked for felling, trees in Poland. Venice was finally obliged to countenance what regulations had previously strictly forbidden all her subjects to do: to buy abroad, not only timber, but ships' hulls which were then rigged at Venice, or even completed ships. Between 1590 and 1616 she received in this way eleven boats from Holland, seven from Patmos, four from the Black Sea, one from Constantinople, one from the Basque country, and one from the Straits of Gibraltar.[152] There is no doubt that this timber crisis offers one explanation of the development of techniques and maritime economies in the Mediterranean.[153] It is not unconnected with the reduction in tonnages, the rising cost of construction, and the success of northern competitors. But other factors were also involved, such as price movements and the high cost of labour, for everything did not depend upon raw materials.[154]

In any case, if maritime civilizations originally grew up near coastal mountains, it was not only because of their forests but also because they formed a natural barrier affording many sheltered places[155] against the

[150] Robert Mantran, *Istanbul dans la seconde moitié du XVIIe siècle*, 1962, p. 445 note 2 and passim.
[151] V. Lamansky, *op. cit.*, p. 83–89 Simancas E° 1329, Venice, 25th November, 1571. Venice's efforts do not seem to have been successful. Even if this policy had been adopted it is doubtful whether it would have had much effect: a letter from the French ambassador at Constantinople, dated 8th May, 1572, reports that in five months the Turks have already built 150 ships, complete with artillery and crews. E. Charrière, *op. cit.*, III, p. 269.
[152] F. C. Lane, *op. cit.*, p. 232.
[153] C. Trasselli, 'Sul naviglio nordico in Sicilia nel secolo XVII', unpublished article, to appear in forthcoming tribute to Vicens Vives.
[154] A study of the cost price of ships would be difficult but possible. There is some valuable information on the price of northern timber in *Dispacci scritti al Senato dal Secretario Marco Ottobon, da Danziga dalli 15 novembre 1590 sino 7 settembre 1591*, copy in A.d.S. Venice, Secreta Archivi Propri, Polonia 2.
[155] *Instructions Nautiques* no. 368, p. 7. Very bad weather is rare on the coast between Nice and Genoa. On the port of Rosas, sheltered and safe from all winds except the south which rarely blows, cf. *Instructions* no. 345, p. 135. On the permanent calm of the port of Antibes, cf. *Instructions* no. 360 p. 175. The mistral blows strongly at Valencia (that is in the gulf of Valencia). It is not dangerous to shipping near the shore, but on the open sea it can force ships to seek shelter in the Balearics: *Instructions* no. 345, p. 12.

relentless north wind, the great enemy of Mediterranean shipping. 'Get under sail with a young south wind or an old north wind', says a proverb of the Aegean.[156] A further explanation is that emigrants from the mountains would naturally go down to the sea, and the tempting waters might well be the best, or the only, way of reaching another part of the coast.[157] So an association might grow up between a sea-going way of life and the mountain economy, which would then interact and complement each other,[158] leading to the extraordinary economic combination of ploughed fields, market gardens, orchards, fishing, and sea-going. On the Dalmatian island of Mljet, a traveller reports that even today the men divide their time between farming and fishing,[159] as they do in the other Dalmatian islands. The same is true of Pantelleria where in addition to the fishing, vines, and orchards, an excellent race of mules is bred. This is the traditional wisdom of the old Mediterranean way of life where the meagre resources of the land are added to the meagre resources of the sea. If it is disappearing today it rarely does so without provoking distress: the Greek fishermen of the Pelion region, 'increasingly drawn to the sea, have to give up their gardens and cottages and move their families to the harbour streets'. But once removed from the traditional balanced pattern of their former way of life, they swell the ranks of the sea poachers who fish with dynamite in spite of government prohibitions.[160] For the sea alone is not rich enough to feed her fishermen.

Neither is the land, on these barren mountains, and this explains the considerable role played by the old rural villages in the economic development of the neighbouring coast. Overlooking the waters of Catalonia the white houses of the villages can be seen through the trees. It is the people of these villages who tend the terraced hillsides of the great massif and produce their horticultural miracles. There is often corresponding to the hill village a fishing village down by the sea, sometimes built out over the sea: Arénys de Mar below Arénys de Mount, Caldetes below Lievaneres, Cabrera below Cabrils.[161] On the Genoese Riviera too the old villages up on the hill often have their fishing port, their *scala* down by the water,[162] and throughout Italy, and not only Italy, there are hundreds of examples, with a continual coming and going of donkeys between the two levels. The seaside village is often more recent in date, an offshoot of the rural village with which it remains closely associated. Its existence is brought about by the economy of the coastal massifs, the terrifying poverty of their

[156] Werner Helwig, *Braconniers de la mer en Grèce*, Fr. trans. 1942, p. 199.

[157] Even today, some parts of the Ligurian coast can only be reached by sea, R. Lopez, 'Aux origines du capitalisme genois', in *Annales d'hist. écon. et soc.*, IX, 1937, p. 434, no. 2. Similarly the railway and road continue to avoid the 'costa brava' of Catalonia.

[158] Cf. the amusing passage on Sicily in Paul Morand, *Lewis et Irène* 1931, p. 17.

[159] E. Fechner, in: Benndorf, *Das Mittelmeerbuch*, p. 99.

[160] Werner Helwig, *op. cit.*, passim.

[161] Pierre Vilar, *op. cit.*, I, p. 249.

[162] On the processions of donkeys between the two levels see P. Vidal de La Blache, *Principles of human geography*, p. 137.

way of life, which even the combination of the two villages cannot transform into plenty. At Rosas, or at San Feliu de Guixols in Catalonia it was still possible quite recently (in 1938) to see food sold in the market in characteristically tiny quantities: a handful of vegetables, a quarter chicken for example.[163] In 1543, the inhabitants of Cassis, sailors and pirates if necessary, blamed poverty for forcing them 'to traffic on the sea and to catch fish, not without great risk and peril',[164] Hundreds of villages on the Mediterranean coast owe their existence to the poverty of the usually mountainous barren hinterland.

The big cities. These seaside villages were the basic unit, but they were not enough to create an active coastal region. A big city was indispensable with its supplies of yards, sail-cloth, rigging, pitch, ropes, and capital; a city with its tradesmen, shipping offices, insurance agents, and all the other services an urban centre can provide. Without Barcelona, and its craftsmen, Jewish merchants, even its soldier adventurers and the many resources of the Santa Maria del Mar quarter, the maritime expansion of the Catalan seaboard would have been incomprehensible. Such success required the intervention, discipline, and imperialism of the big city. It was in the sixteenth century that the Catalan seaboard first awoke to a *historically* visible maritime life. But its expansion only began two centuries later with the rise of Barcelona. Then for three hundred years the procession of ships from the little ports of the Catalan seaboard plied ceaselessly back and forth ont he Barcelona 'beach', where sailing ships from the Balearics would also put in to harbour as well as boats from Valencia which was always something of a rival, Biscay whalers, and the constant flow of boats from Marseilles and Italy. But when Barcelona lost her independence, after the long struggle against John of Aragon, twenty years later in 1402 suffered the equally grave loss of her Jewish community, her *juderia*, and finally when her capitalists gradually stopped putting their money into risky investments, preferring the regular income from the *Taula de Cambi*[165] or investing in land near the city, then began the decline of the great merchant city and the Catalan seaboard dependent upon it. So great was its decline that Catalan trade practically disappeared from the Mediterranean and the shores of the county were left undefended when they were ravaged by French corsairs at the time of the wars between

[163] The same observation could be made of the 'starving Ligurian coast' mentioned by Michelet.

[164] A. C., Cassis, B.B. 36. *Biens communaux* 24th–25th September, 1543. It appeared from the rest of the inquiry that 'the vines are plentiful but yield little, the olive trees sometimes produce nothing for up to five years because of the drought; the land is in general impossible to plough . . .'. Cf. Jules Sion's perceptive remark: 'Provence very nearly became one of the regions of the Mediterranean where the scarcity of good land and the patterns of settlement on the coast led the inhabitants of the littoral to live like the Barbary pirates', *France Méditerranéenne*, 1934, p. 110.

[165] A. P. Usher, 'Deposit Banking in Barcelona 1300–1700' in *Journal of Economics and Business*, IV, 1931, p. 122.

the Valois and the Habsburgs – and later by the equally dangerous Algerine corsairs, who all but settled in the wastes of the Ebro delta.

Marseilles, Genoa and Ragusa played similar predominant roles in the lives of the small ports surrounding them. There were even cases where the dependencies were not on the same coast as the metropolis,[166] for example Venice's hold over the Istrian coast, the Dalmatian coast, and the distant Greek islands. Marseilles too attracted not only the swarming population of the Provençal coast, which was completely at her service, but also a large proportion of the sailors from Cape Corse. And Genoa used Ragusan cargo vessels.

The attraction of the big cities is the more understandable in that sailors in the Mediterranean have always been wanderers ready to migrate. In 1461, the Venetian Senate expressed anxiety at the shortage of crews and cabin boys and asked for details: the sailors 'go to Pisa . . . where they are well paid . . . to our loss and another's gain'. Many of these sailors left because they had debts to pay or heavy fines imposed by the *Cinque Savii* or the *Signor de nocte* – the night police of Venice.[167] As the result of a legal dispute in 1526, the accounts have survived of the ship *Santa Maria de Bogoña*, which sailed in the Atlantic, stayed for a while at Cadiz, and put in at Lisbon and the island of São Tomé before arriving at Santo Domingo with her cargo of Negro slaves.[168] This takes us out of Mediterranean waters, but among the *marineros* and *grumetes* (cabin boys) on board her could be found sailors from Lipari, Sicily, Majorca, Genoa, Savona, some Greeks, and a man from Toulon – a real rendezvous for adventurers. At the Hague in 1532, there were similar complaints that the sailors, 'always ready to move away', were leaving Holland and Zeeland for Lübeck.[169] In 1604 a group of Venetian seamen, 'being no longer able to live on the ships of the Signoria because of the low wages', fled to Florence and no doubt to Leghorn.[170] These were daily occurrences of minor importance, but when circumstances lent a hand, they might become indices of large-scale change.

The changing fortunes of maritime regions. This constant flow of migrations completes the picture of the maritime regions. On the whole it is a straightforward one. They were directly concerned in the fortunes of the Mediterranean as a whole, and they thrived, stagnated, declined, or revived according to the state of those fortunes.

[166] So when one tries to estimate the size of the maritime population of an island like Corsica, as Jean Brunhes does, *op. cit.*, p. 69, it seems to me unwise not to take into account Corsican sailors outside the island. Marseilles still has a large population of Corsican sailors today.

[167] A.d.S. Venice, Senato Mar, 7, f° 2 v°.

[168] Archivio General de Indias, Seville, Justicia, legajo no. 7. The lawsuit was in 1530. My attention was kindly drawn to this document by my colleague Enrique Otto. The sailors' origins are presumed from their surnames.

[169] R. Häpke, *Niederländische Akten und Urkunden*, 1913, I, p. 35.

[170] Domenico Sella, *Commerci e industrie a Venezia nel secolo XVII*, 1961, p. 24, n. 1.

Take once more the example of Catalonia. Outside forces were largely responsible for her original rise; it was thanks to the teachings and techniques brought over by Italian immigrants from Genoa and Pisa after the eleventh century that Catalonia developed a thriving maritime economy, two hundred years before the glorious reign of Peter the Great, *Pere lo Gran*. History sooner or later takes back her gifts. By the sixteenth century the decline of Catalonia, already perceptible in the fifteenth, had become evident. Her shipping activity was reduced to sending a few boats to Marseilles or the Balearics. Only rarely did one of her ships venture as far as Sardinia, Naples,[171] or Sicily, or to the African *presidios*. At the very end of the sixteenth century a few voyages began again between Barcelona and Alexandria. But until then activity was at such a standstill on the Catalan seaboard that when Philip II decided in the Grand Council of 1562 to build a great armed fleet, he was obliged to place orders in Italy. And in an effort to revive the arsenal of Barcelona he brought in experts from the boatyards of San Pier d'Arena, in Genoa.[172]

These abrupt declines, so frequent in the Mediterranean, where so many sea-going populations rose and fell in turn, can generally be explained as follows. The seashore provinces, always short of men, could not survive for long what we would call periods of prosperity, and which were in fact periods of hard work and strain. To a very large extent, maritime life was a proletarian life, which wealth and the accompanying inactivity regularly corrupted. A *provveditore* of the Venetian fleet said in 1583, the seaman is like a fish, he cannot stay long out of the water without going rotten.[173]

And as soon as signs of strain appeared they were often exploited and aggravated by competition. The presence of Biscay *balaneros* in the port of Barcelona in the first years of the fourteenth century is an early sign of either strain or competition. And in the context of Genoese history, so is the proliferation of Ragusan sailors and merchantmen hastening to the service of the *Dominante* in the sixteenth century. But this astounding good fortune exhausted in turn the resources of the little world of Ragusa, which consisted of a few kilometres of coastline and some unimportant islands. Between 1590 and 1600 a few incidents were enough to compromise the prosperity which had previously seemed unshakeable.

That does not mean to say that in periods of depression maritime life disappeared altogether from those regions which had previously been thriving. At such times it would subside into a modest everyday form, in which it was almost indestructible. So in the sixteenth century the coasts of Syria and Catalonia lapsed into a quiet rhythm of reduced activity,

[171] At the beginning of the sixteenth century the Neapolitan documents I have consulted mention Catalan merchants living in Naples more frequently than Catalan ships such as that of Joanne Hostales, which took on a cargo of wheat in Sicily and transported it to Naples (April-May, 1517, A.d.S. Naples, Dipendenze della Sommaria, fascio 548). After the middle of the century these mentions become very rare.

[172] Simancas E° 331, Aragon, 1564: a list of sixteen experts, carpenters, caulkers, and masters of galleys, sent from Genoa to Barcelona '*para la fabrica de las galeras*'.

[173] V. Lamansky, *op. cit.*, p. 564.

while there was also a decline in shipping off the shores of Sicily, Naples, Andalusia, Valencia, and Majorca. As far as the last region is concerned there is a clear connection between its decline and the destructive advance of the Barbary pirates. Nonetheless it continued to survive and to provide more material for an active coastal trade than our usual sources of information would suggest. The swift frigates of the privateers which at the end of the century provided the means of effective Christian revenge, from Alicante, Almeria, an old maritime centre, and Palma on Majorca, did not spring from nowhere.

Only a few minor incidents in the background of history indicate the existence of this inconspicuous activity. We have already mentioned the coral fishermen of Trapani, who ventured, in spite of the Barbary corsairs, to the reefs on the African coast. The documents of the French Consulate at Tunis which was set up in 1574, frequently mention Sicilian barques and also small barques from Naples.[174] By contrast, it is interesting to note the absence of Neapolitan coral fishermen, those of Torre del Greco for instance, from the Sardinian reefs where they had been regular visitors in the fifteenth century. Were there serious reasons for their absence? Perhaps not, for there was no shortage of Neapolitan boats either at Rome or Civitavecchia, Leghorn or Genoa.

There was a similar profusion of balancelles, barques, and brigantines on the shores of southern Spain, sailing to North Africa. A document of 1567 records the presence at Algiers of a series of Valencian seamen who, since they were free, must have been there to trade.[175] At the end of the century some other Valencians joined the exciting operations that organized the escape of captives from the prisons of Algiers. Some of their accounts are as thrilling as anything out of Cervantes.[176]

In fact, the apparent death of a coastal region may be no more than a change in the rhythm of its life. It may pass in turn from coastal trading to long-distance voyages, that is for the historian, from an unrecorded to a recorded existence, vanishing again from his attentive gaze every time it lapses into its obscure everyday life. It is as if a regular law has determined the life cycle of the populations and the sea.

3. THE ISLANDS[177]

The Mediterranean islands are more numerous and above all more important than is generally supposed. Some of the larger ones are miniature continents: Sardinia, Corsica, Sicily, Cyprus, Crete, and Rhodes. The

[174] For the Sicilian boats see P. Grandchamp, *La France en Tunisie, à la fin du XVIe siècle*, Tunis, 1920, p. 32, 36, 46, 63, 81, 95; for the Neapolitan *ibid.*, p. 30, 31, 33.

[175] 24th January, 1560, A.N., K. 1494, B. 12, no. 18.

[176] See Vol. II, Part II, Ch. 7, section on Christian privateers.

[177] On islands see the curious and striking article of Ratzelian inspiration by Franz Olshaussen, 'Inselpsychologie' in *Kölnische Zeitung*, 12, VII, 1942. The starting point of his remarks is the case of the Chilean island Mas a Tierra, which was the original Robinson Crusoe's island.

smaller ones may combine with neighbouring archipelagos to form families of islands. Large or small, their significance lies in providing indispensable landfalls on the sea routes and affording stretches of comparatively calm water to which shipping is attracted, either between islands or between island and mainland coasts. To the east lies the Aegean archipelago, so scattered over the sea as to be inseparable from it;[178] in the centre the group of islands between Sicily and Africa; in the north the Ionian and Dalmatian islands, which string out like a convoy of ships along the Balkan seaboard, in the sixteenth century flying the flag of St. Mark. There are really two separate flotillas here: one in the Ionian Sea consisting of Zante, Cephalonia, Santa Maura, and Corfu; the other in the Adriatic, with the Dalmatian islands running from Meleda and Lagosta in the south to Quarnero, Veglia, and Cherso behind Istria in the north. Between the Ionian and Dalmatian convoys runs quite a long stretch of coastline including the inhospitable Albanian shore and the little territory of Ragusa. But taken all together, the islands provided a stopping route from Venice to Crete; from Crete a busy trade route linked Cyprus and Syria. These islands, running along the axis of her power, were Venice's stationary fleet.

The western groups of islands are equally important: near Sicily, Stromboli, the Egades, the Lipari islands; further north, the Tuscan archipelago where in the middle of the sixteenth century Cosimo de' Medici built the fortress of Portoferraio on the island of Elba; off the coast of Provence, the Iles d'Hyères and the Iles d'Or; further west, in the open stretch of the western Mediterranean, the Balearics, Majorca, Minorca, Ibiza – the salt island – and the scarcely accessible rock of Formentera. This group has always been of considerable importance: an entire shipping sector revolved around it.

These are the large or fairly large islands. To list the little ones and the very tiny ones (some of which are famous like the islet of Algiers, the islands of Venice, Naples, and Marseilles) would be quite impossible. There is hardly a stretch of the Mediterranean shore which is not broken up into islands, islets and rocks.[179] To rid the coasts of corsairs waiting for a good chance, or taking on fresh water, is called in the correspondence of the viceroys of Sicily, 'limpiar las islas', 'cleaning up the islands', that is checking the moorings of a few dozen islets which were all classic places for an ambush.

Isolated worlds? Whether large or small, these islands of all sizes and shapes make up a coherent human environment in so far as similar

[178] And vice versa, if one thinks of the etymology of the word *archipelago*.

[179] A small example, the islands and islets in the Straits of Bonifacio: *Instructions Nautiques*, no. 368, p. 152 ff. Over a larger area, the islands and islets of the North African coast: *Instructions*, no. 360, p. 225, 231, 235, 237, 238, 241, 242, 244, 246, 247, 257, 262, 265, 266, 267, 277, 282, 284, 285, 287, 291, 297, 305, 308, 309, 310, 311, 313, 314, 331.

pressures are exerted upon them, making them both far ahead and far behind the general history of the sea; pressures that may divide them, often brutally, between the two opposite poles of archaism and innovation.

Sardinia is an average example. In spite of its size it was quite clearly not of key importance in the sixteenth century, whatever the geographers of the period and Sardinian chroniclers of all periods might say. It was too lost in the sea to play an important role, too far from the enriching contacts that linked Sicily, for example, with Italy and Africa. Mountainous, excessively divided, a prisoner of its poverty,[180] it was a self-contained world with its own language,[181] customs, archaic economy, and pervasive pastoralism – in some regions remaining as Rome must have found it long ago. This archaic character of the islands (Sardinia and others), their strange capacity of preserving for centuries antique forms of civilization and mixtures of folklore has been so often remarked upon that there is no need to describe it at length.[182]

But simultaneously with this isolation and in striking contrast, some accidental change of ruler or of fortune may bring to the island's shores an entirely different civilization and way of life, with its dress, customs, and language, which the island may receive and preserve intact over several centuries, bearing living witness to forgotten revolutions. 'Isolation' is a relative phenomenon. That the sea surrounds the islands and cuts them off from the rest of the world more effectively than any other environment is certainly true whenever they are really situated outside the normal sea routes. But when they are integrated into shipping routes, and for one reason or another (often external and quite gratuitous reasons) become one of the links in a chain, they are on the contrary actively involved in the dealings of the outside world, less cut off from them than some inaccessible mountain areas.

To come back to the example of Sardinia, in the Middle Ages it was drawn into the sphere of Pisa, then of Genoa; their solicitude was accounted for by its gold mines. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Catalan expansion found a foothold there on its way east. Catalan is still spoken today in Alghero on the west coast, and scholars have detected a curious Hispano-Gothic architecture there. In the sixteenth century and even before no doubt, the island was the Mediterranean's leading exporter of

[180] E. Albèri, *op. cit.*, I, III, p. 267, the low cost of living, the 'brutta' population. In 1603, its population consisted of 66,669 households, i.e. 266,676 inhabitants using a coefficient of 4. Francesco Corridore, *Storia documentata della populazione di Sardegna*, Turin, 1902, p. 19–20.

[181] On 'Sardinian' and its three dialects, Ovidio and Meyer Lübke, in *Grundriss der romanischen Phil.*, ed. G. Groeber, 2nd ed., p. 551.

[182] We know for instance that Chios, which was under Turkish rule after 1566, remained Catholic long afterwards, earning the title of 'little Rome' of the Levant. Chateaubriand remarked on its Italian character as late as the nineteenth century. And conversely, Malta, the island of the Knights, and Pantelleria have retained their Arab population and dialects to the present day. One is also tempted to mention the curious linguistic analogy of the Crimea, where Gothic dialects persisted until the time of Luther; but the Crimea is not an island, and our evidence in this case is not complete.

cheeses.[183] And so through Cagliari the island was in touch with the rest of the western world; boats and galleons loaded with her *cavallo* or *salso* cheese sailed to the neighbouring coast of Italy, Leghorn, Genoa, and Naples; even to Marseilles, in spite of competition from rivals, the cheeses of Milan and the Auvergne; and even to Barcelona. Another way of being integrated into Mediterranean life in the sixteenth century was to be constantly harassed by the attacks of the Barbary pirates. The piracy was not always successful: corsairs were sometimes captured, though not very often. More numerous were the Sardinians, fishermen or inhabitants of the coast, who, carried off by the Barbary pirates, every year swelled the ranks of the unfortunate captives or the rich renegades of Algiers.

Sardinia then, which has been described as impenetrable, had windows opening outwards from which it is sometimes possible to glimpse, as from an observatory, the general history of the sea. One historian, P. Amat di S. Filippo, has investigated the prices of Moslem slaves at Cagliari in the sixteenth century.[184] He discovered a striking drop in prices after 1580, which naturally corresponds to a considerable increase in the number of slaves on the market at Cagliari. This is because before 1580 the only slaves for sale on the island were a few Barbary pirates who had either been wrecked on Sardinian shores or had been captured by the inhabitants during one of their raids.[185] After 1580 prisoners for auction came from another source. They were brought in by Christian pirate vessels, especially by the light frigates from Almeria and Alicante, for which Cagliari was a convenient stopping place. So Sardinia was in her own way affected by the revival of active Christian privateering, a sort of counter-offensive launched against the Barbary corsairs and based in the Balearics, southern Spain, Naples, and Sicily. It might be argued that this was more true of Cagliari than of the whole of Sardinia; that Cagliari was somewhat isolated and faced seawards, having little to do with the rest of the island. There is some truth in the argument: but Cagliari was after all a Sardinian town, linked to the nearby plain, the mountains, and the whole of the island.

Precarious lives. All islands have towns like this, affected by the general life of the sea, and at the same time (if only because they handle imports and exports) looking inward to that world which the historian, preoccupied as he is with texts concerning political history, does not notice at first glance: the withdrawn and insecure way of life, the biology isolated as under a bell jar of which naturalists have long been aware.[186] There is

[183] There was a regular link with Leghorn. For the export of Sardinian cheeses to Valencia, Simancas E° 335, 6th September, 1574, f° 46.

[184] Pietro Amat di San Filippo, 'Della schiavitù e del servaggio in Sardegna' in *Miscellanea di storia italiana*, 3rd series, vol. II, 1895.

[185] Stefano Spinola to the Marquis of Mantua, Genoa, 30th April, 1532, A.d.S. Mantua, A. Gonzaga, Genova 759, bad weather drove ashore on the Sardinian coast two galleys, four galliots and a *fuste* whose Turkish sailors almost all escaped.

[186] P. Vidal de la Blache, *Tableau de la géographie de la France*, 1908, p. 25–6. Théodore Monod, *L'hippopotame et le philosophe*, 1943, p. 77.

hardly an island that does not possess, alongside its human peculiarities, its animal and vegetable curiosities that are sooner or later revealed to the outside world. In his description of Cyprus which appeared in 1580, the Reverend Father Stefano[187] (who claimed to be descended from the Royal House of Lusignan) describes 'the peculiar herbs' and 'perfumes' of the island: white *apium*, a sort of water-celery, which is eaten 'crystallised in sugar', *oldanum* which is used to make the liqueur of the same name, the tree known as the 'Cyprus tree' (black cypress), similar to the pomegranate tree, which flowers in clusters like the vine, and whose distilled leaves produce the orange dye that is used to colour the tails of gentlemen's horses, 'as is customarily seen there'. It is also surprising to find that cotton seeds were mixed with chopped straw as fodder for the animals. And what a wealth of medicinal herbs! Among the curious beasts there were 'wild cattle, donkeys, and boars', and the 'vine' birds, buntings, of which thousands of barrels were exported to Venice and Rome, pickled in vinegar.

But extraordinary fauna and flora can never be taken to indicate abundance. None of the islands was assured of the future. The great problem for all of them, never or only partly solved, was how to live off their own resources, off the soil, the orchards, the flocks, and if that was not possible, to look outwards. All the islands with a few exceptions (Sicily in particular) were lands of hunger. The extreme cases were the Venetian islands in the Levant: Corfu,[188] Crete,[189] or Cyprus, which were constantly threatened by famine in the second half of the century. It was a catastrophe when the *caramusalis* did not arrive on time, with their providential cargoes of grain from Thrace, when the stocks of wheat and millet in the stores of the citadels had been exhausted. In fact a black market was organized around these Levantine islands, hence the endless prevarications of the officials reported in inquiries.

The situation was not as precarious as this everywhere.[190] But the

[187] Fr. Steffano di Lusignano, *Description de toute l'isle de Cypre*, Paris, 1580, p. 223 v° ff.

[188] Corfu was also short of meat: Philippe de Canaye, *Le voyage de Levant*, 1573, published by H. Hauser, 1897, p. 191. On Corfu in 1576, see the account of Giustiniano, B.N. Paris, Ital. 1220, f° 35 ff: 17,000 inhabitants. The island had fertile but uncultivated plains and could only produce enough grain to last it four months, but exported wine, oil, and flocks to the mainland.

[189] Even in the eighteenth century, Crete was short of grain (Tott, *Memoirs*, II, p. 221). Crete seems at that period to have been an island primarily exporting oil and soap, (*ibid.*, p. 221). For the grain from the caramusalis some of which was brought in illegally, see Hieronimo Ferro, 6th October, 1560, A.d.S. Venice, Seno. Secreta Const. Fza 2/B, f° 274. Without help from her neighbours, Crete would only have been able to provide for one third of the year; hence the frequent shortages and constant anxiety: the harvest was poor on Crete, and there is no grain worth buying, explains Giacomo Foscarini, *provveditore* general of the kingdom of Candia, to the Council of Ten (Candia, 15th November, 1574, A.d.S. Venice, Capi del Consiglio dei Dieci, Lettere, Ba 286, f° 5). In 1573 there was scarcity on Zante, Philippe de Canaye, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

[190] Particularly, and this may seem paradoxical, on the poorer and more backward islands, which had fewer inhabitants and above all were not exploited by crops grown for export. So Sardinia could sometimes afford the luxury of exporting wheat. G. Riba y Garcia, *op. cit.*, p. 317–318 (1587) or p. 320 (1588). But in bad years, the island suffered shortages like the others (V.R. of Sardinia to H.M., Caller, 22nd September, 1576, Simancas E° 335, f° 356.) In Corsica, the export of grain, which had been declared free for five years in 1590, soon had to be suspended because of poor harvests. A. Marcelli, 'Intorno al cosidetto mal governo genovese dell'Isola', in *Archivo storico di Corsica*, 1937, p. 416.

Balearics could hardly support their military or merchant towns,[191] particularly since little progress had been made towards farming the land. The clearing of stones from the fields of Minorca in the plain behind Mahon, was not completed until the eighteenth century.[192] They had to rely on cereal imports from Sicily and even North Africa. On Malta, too, food was short. In spite of the many privileges permitting the island to import wheat from both Sicily and France, Malta was always in difficulties, so much so that in the summer the galleys of the Knights would stop grain ships coming from the Sicilian *caricatori*, exactly like the corsairs of Tripoli.

As well as the threat of famine there was also the risk from the sea, which in the mid-sixteenth century was more warlike than ever.[193] The Balearics, Corsica, Sicily, and Sardinia, to take the islands we know best, were besieged territories. They had constantly to be defended, watch towers had to be built, fortifications erected, extended, and equipped with artillery, either pieces sent in from outside or cast on the spot by the primitive methods of bell founders.[194] And of course garrisons and reinforcements had to be placed along the coast, as soon as the fine weather arrived and with it the campaign season. It was not easy for Spain to hold Sardinia, or even to be certain of an island as nearby as Minorca.[195] Charles V, after the sack of Mahon in 1535, envisaged, to forestall further danger, nothing less than the evacuation of the entire population of Minorca to the larger island, Majorca.[196] The case of Elba, in the Tuscan archipelago, was equally tragic. The island was brutally surprised in the

[191] E. Albèri, I. III, p. 226, does state that Majorca was self-sufficient; this was in about 1558. At the time the island's population was between 45,000 and 90,000 (30 towns with 500 to 600 households each). But there were lean years too. Cf. 1588 and 1589, for example, when the island was unable to obtain grain from Oran. G. Riba y Garcia, *El Consejo supremo de Aragon*, p. 288–289.

[192] Pierre Monbeig, 'Vie de relations et spécialisation agricole, Les Baléares au XVIIIe siècle' in *Ann. d'hist. éc. et. soc.* IV, 1932, p. 539.

[193] Viceroy of Majorca to H.M., 20th December, 1567: '. . . que todo el año estan cercadas de fustas de moros de manera que muy pocos bateles entran o salen que no se pierdan y este año se han tomado siete o ocho bergantines y toda su substancia se va en Argel . . .'. On this besieging of the Balearics, see also 10th January, 1524 in *Tomiciana* VIII p. 301, M. Sanudo, *op. cit.*, VI, p. 236, 16th March, 1532.

[194] Ciudadela, 10th July, 1536, A.N., K. 1690. Cuidadela after the raid of the Barbarossas. Cf. also on the subject of the founder whose castings went wrong, *ibid.*, Majorca, 29th August, 1536.

[195] On the defence of Sardinia, cf. below, the construction of watchtowers. On troops stationed on the island during the summer, see for example the documents: 8th September, 1561, Simancas E° 328; 25th July, 1565, *ibid.*, E° 332, 6th August, 1565 and 5th July, 1566.

[196] Information given to me at Simancas by Federico Chabod. On Minorca, cf. Cosme Parpal y Marqués, *La isla de Menorca en tiempo de Felipe II*, Barcelona, 1913.

sixteenth century by the advance of the Barbary corsairs and became a maritime frontier under constant enemy attack. Its coastal towns – the large villages along the sea front – fell into abandon. The population had to flee to the mountains of the interior, until Cosimo de' Medici undertook the fortification of Portoferraio in 1548.

These disadvantages explain the historical poverty at the heart of all the islands, even the richest among them: and more pronounced of course in the others, in Corsica and Sardinia where, as we have noted, the economy was primitive and predominantly pastoral; or in the mountains of Cyprus where, as in the mountains of Crete, there stretched one of the most characteristic no-man's-lands of the Mediterranean, the refuge of the poor, bandits, and outlaws. In the interior of even Sicily, rich Sicily, what do we find but a land without roads, rivers without bridges, and poor sheep farming, whose stock was of such low quality that in the seventeenth century Barbary sheep had to be brought over to improve it?[197]

On the paths of general history. A precarious, restricted, and threatened life, such was the lot of the islands, their domestic life at any rate. But their external life, the role they have played in the forefront of history far exceeds what might be expected from such poor territories. The events of history often lead to the islands. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that they make use of them. Take for example the role played by the islands as stages in the dissemination of crops: sugarcane, which was brought from India to Egypt, passed from Egypt to Cyprus, becoming established there in the tenth century; from Cyprus it soon reached Sicily in the eleventh century; from Sicily it was taken west; Henry the Navigator had some brought from Sicily to send to Madeira, which was the first 'sugar island' of the Atlantic; from Madeira, sugar growing quickly moved to the Azores, the Canaries, the Cape Verde islands and beyond, to America. The islands played a similar role in the dissemination of silkworms, and generally in most cultural movements, some of which were extremely complicated. It was by way of Cyprus and the sumptuous court of the House of Lusignan, that there came to the West, more slowly than the light of some stars reaches the earth, the costumes of the ancient bygone China of the T'ang dynasty. The long pointed shoes and the hennins, which date a period of French history so well that they immediately suggest the frivolous court of Charles VI and the *Très Riches Heures* of the Duke of Berry, had been fashionable in China in the fifth century. And this distant heritage was passed on to the West by the kings of Cyprus.[198]

We should not really be surprised. The islands lay on the paths of the great sea routes and played a part in international relations. To their ordinary day-to-day existence was added a chapter in the history of great events. Their economies often suffered the impact of these events, since

[197] B. Com. Palermo, Qq D. 56, f° 259–273, a series of curious and interesting letters.

[198] G. Bratianu, *op. cit.*, p. 269 ff.

they could offer no resistance to some demands. How many islands were invaded by foreign crops, whose justification lay solely in their position on Mediterranean or even world markets? Grown for export only, these crops regularly threatened the equilibrium of the island's economy. They were often responsible for the threat of famine mentioned above. We can see this in an exaggerated form, blindingly clearly in the islands of the 'Mediterranean Atlantic': Madeira, the Canaries, São Tomé, which were all literally ravaged by the monoculture of cane sugar, as colonial north-east Brazil was to be later. Madeira, which was originally a timber island, rapidly lost the major part of its forest cover to the sugar mills and their need for fuel. This revolution was carried out entirely in the interest of a Europe which was clamouring for the precious sugar, and not in the interests of the islanders themselves. For the tragedy of sugarcane is that wherever it is grown it prevents the growing of other crops in rotation and restricts the space available for food crops. This new arrival completely upset the old balance and was the more dangerous since it was protected by a powerful capitalism which in the sixteenth century was lodged in many quarters, in Italy, Lisbon, and Antwerp. And it was impossible to offer resistance. In general the island populations were unable to withstand this drain on their resources. In the Canaries, sugar was almost certainly as responsible as the brutalities of the first conquerors for the disappearance of the indigenous natives, the Guanches. And it was the sugar plantations which generalized the use of slave labour, leading to the enslavement of the Berbers of the African coast, whom Christian pirates from the Canaries would carry off in their raids, and particularly to the slave trade in Negroes from Guinea and Angola which in the middle of the century, again because of sugar, reached the shores of the American continent. These are examples from the Atlantic. But there is no shortage of strictly Mediterranean examples. Take the wheat-growing invasion of Sicily; until 1590 and even after, Sicily was the Canada or Argentina of the western countries of the Mediterranean. Chios produced mastic, both the resin and the drink;[199] Cyprus, cotton, vines, and sugar;[200] Crete and Corfu, wines;[201] Djerba, olives. These single-crop economies were the result of foreign intervention, artificial and often harmful to what is expressed by the German term *Volkswirtschaft*.

At Cyprus this was to be proved in 1572 when the Turks captured the

[199] L. F. Heyd, *Histoire du Commerce du Levant au Moyen Age*, 1885–6 p. 336. Th. Gautier, *Voyage à Constantinople*, p. 54; J. W. Zinkeisen, *op. cit.*, II, p. 901, n. 2. Girolamo Giustiniano, *La description et l'histoire de l'isle de Scios*, 1606. On the island of Chios after the Turkish conquest of 1566, and its towns with their deserted streets and ruined palaces, cf. Jacobus Paleologus, *De Rebus Constantinopoli et Chii*, 1573. On gum mastic, cf. J. B. Tavernier, *op. cit.* p. 118.

[200] And sometimes wheat. As for the gold and silver threads of Cyprus, I am inclined to agree with J. Lestocquoy (in *Mélanges d'histoire sociale*, III, 1943, p. 25) that this was only a trade description. Cyprus also exported casks of ortolans: J. B. Tavernier, *op. cit.*, Persian Travels, p. 80.

[201] Baron de Busbecq, *Lettres*, Paris, 1748, p. 178, drank at Constantinople 'much wine from the isle of Crete'.

island from Venice. The wealth of the island under Venetian rule had been the vineyards, the cotton plantations, and the fields of sugarcane. But whose wealth? It had belonged to a Venetian and Genoese aristocracy whose sumptuous mansions can still be seen today in the old quarter of Nicosia; certainly not to the natives of the island, Orthodox Greeks. So the Turkish conquest unleashed a social revolution. We have a curious account of it from an English sailor in 1595. A Cypriot merchant had told him the history of the island, pointing out the ruined palaces of the former Genoese and Venetian noblemen, whom the Turks massacred as just retribution, according to our witness, for the extortionate demands they made on the peasants.[202] Indeed, at the time of the invasion, the Venetians were abandoned by the Greeks both in the countryside and the towns. During the Turkish attack on Nicosia in 1570, 'the inhabitants, of all social conditions, . . . almost all remained sleeping in their houses'.[203] It is true that the departure of the Venetians was followed by a drop in exports of cotton, raw and spun alike, and by such a marked deterioration of the vineyards that Venice was able to arrange to buy back the precious leather flasks used for the manufacture of wine, as they were no longer of any use on the island. But this does not necessarily mean the decline of Cyprus. There is no evidence that Turkish rule led to a fall in living standards for the inhabitants of the island.[204]

Crete and Corfu afford matter for similar reflections. Here, as in Cyprus, we must imagine a countryside converted by man for the cultivation of the vine, producing raisins and the wine known as malmsey. On Corfu, the vines spread from the hills and mountains to the plains, the *pianure*, which were easier to cultivate.[205] They drove out the wheat, but in the exclusive production of one crop there is always the possibility of surplus production and a slump. On Crete vines were torn up on official orders in 1584, to

[202] R. Hakluyt, *The principal navigations* . . . London, 1600, p. 309. On the complicity of the near-serf peasants in the Turkish conquest, cf. Julian Lopez to H.M., Venice, 26th October, 1570, Relacion de Venecia, 28th September, 1570 Simancas E° 1327. Cardinal de Rambouillet to Charles IX, Rome, 5th November, 1570, E. Charrière, *op. cit.*, III, p. 124. There was unrest on Chios in 1548–9, when the inhabitants wishing to be free from the *Mahona* offered the island to Cosimo de' Medici, who prudently refused it (Doroni, *L'isola di Chio offerta a Cosimo dei Medici*, Rassegna Nazionale, 1912, p. 41–53). There is a fascinating book to be written some time on the subjects of Venice and Genoa and their social and economic exploitation. Rich sources on this subject in the precious collection of V. Lamansky, *op. cit.*

[203] A.d.S. Venice, *Annali di Venezia*, Famagusta, 8th October, 1570.

[204] On the fate of Cyprus under the Turks, it is important not to forget that in the Venetian period, the island was empty and had only a small population (towards 1570, 180,000 inhabitants, of whom 90,000 were serfs and 50,000 *villani liberi*, 'e il restante è nelle città et terre', B.N. Paris, Ital. 340, f° 55. The Turks began resettlement with Anatolian peasants (H. Kretschmayr, *Geschichte von Venedig*, 1920, III, p. 62). The peasants were then all allotted the same status, that of subjects, the old distinctions being abolished. There was a collapse of the Latin clergy. Many Cypriots became Turk to escape the *Kharadj* ('carage'). But nothing is ever simple; Italian civilization persisted. J. B. Tavernier writes towards 1650 'they were all clad after the Italian manner, both Men and Women'. (*op. cit.*, p. 80).

[205] Museo Correr, D. delle Rose, 21, f° 32 v°.

cries of anger as may be imagined. The victims went so far as to declare that they would make 'no distinction between being subjects of Venice or of the Turks'.[206] This 'colonial' economy evidently had its successes and failures. Many conditions had to be fulfilled before the system could work properly, bringing together vine growers, landowners, sailors, merchants, and distant customers. The wine and raisin trade had in fact long been established over a wide area. Even in England malmsey wine was known and appreciated as a luxury which was in the sixteenth century the equivalent of port today. 'He was so moved and dejected,' says Bandello of one of the characters in his *Novelle*, 'that she went to fetch him a glass of malmsey.'

A final example of monoculture is Djerba, off the southern coast of Tunisia. The Venetian islands were the wine islands; Djerba was the oil island. In circumstances far from clear, while mainland Tunisia was losing the groves of olive trees that were so plentiful in Roman times, Djerba succeeded in keeping hers. This preserved wealth meant that even in the sixteenth century the island was economically important.[207] It had become an oasis of olive oil between Tunisia and Tripoli, which were in general, particularly in the South, rancid-butter countries. The island's oil was of excellent quality, cheap, and suitable for all uses, even the treatment of cloth and fabrics, an oil that was easy to export, as Leo Africanus remarked at the beginning of the century. After 1590 it was to Djerba that the English went for the oil that had previously been supplied to them by Spain.

But geography only records Djerba as a low-lying island with tidal channels,[208] and the history of events only mentions it as the battlefield for the actions of 1510, 1520, and 1560. Yet in the last of these battles the oil played a part. The Christian fleet had anchored at Djerba, instead of pressing on to Tripoli. If it allowed itself to be surprised there by the armada of Piāle Pasha, of whose approach it had been warned, it was because the Christian ships had delayed at the island, taking on merchandise, in particular olive oil; as the report of the *visitador*, Quiroga, established after the disaster.[209]

As long as they did not impose too crippling a monoculture, however, these large-scale activities formed the vital wealth of the islands, if only because they ensured the returns necessary for their survival. They provided them with well-earned reputations. Ibiza was the salt island; the

[206] Marciana, 7299, 9th June, 1584. On the troubles in Candia after 1571, there are several documents, especially in the *Annali di Venezia*, 20th August, 22nd August, 30th August, and 16th September, 1571.

[207] On Djerba as well as olive trees there grew palm trees, apple trees, and pear trees. From this point of view too it was an unusual island. And Djerba as an island conservatory harboured Jewish communities said to date from the persecutions of Titus; above all it was a small Kharijite world, like the Mzab, the repository of ancient ritual and extremely old types of architecture.

[208] *Instructions Nautiques*, no. 360, p. 338, 359–363.

[209] See Vol. II, Part III, Ch. 2, section on Djerba expedition & note 61.

salt of Naxos was also famous, as was its wine 'both White and Claret';[210] Elba was the iron island. And there was Tabarka, the coral island, domain of the Lomellini, an island with several other resources: the exporting of grain and hides, and the ransoming of prisoners who took refuge there. There were the famous fisheries of La Galite on the Barbary coast; or the fisheries of the Dalmatian island of Liesena, which it suddenly lost when the shoals of sardines, according to a document of 1588, just moved off one day to the rock of Pelagosa.[211] Rhodes was able to exploit its position, which assured it, first in the time of the Knights and then in the time of the Turks, after 1522, of 'domination over all the other islands and the admiralty of the whole Mediterranean'.[212] Patmos, in the Archipelago, for want of anything better, bred 'the most troublesome of all the islanders, after Samos', and lived off raids 'both on Christians and Turks'.[213]

Emigration from the islands. But the commonest way in which the islands entered the life of the outside world was by emigration. All the islands (like the mountains, and many Mediterranean islands are mountains anyway) exported their people.[214]

We need hardly dwell on the Greek migrations which affected the entire Archipelago, including the large island of Crete. But it is doubtful whether they were ever as important in the sixteenth century as the movements from the island of emigrants *par excellence*, Corsica. The population, too great for the island's resources, swarmed in all directions, and there can hardly have been an event in the Mediterranean in which a Corsican did not participate.[215] There were even Corsicans at Genoa, the hated *Dominante*: one must take bread where one can find it. There were Corsicans at Venice. They were already to be found in the fifteenth century, working on the land of the Tuscan Maremma; in the sixteenth century the peasants of Niolo, who were being harassed by Genoa, went to colonize such fever-ridden lands in Italy and even Sardinia, where they often made their fortunes.[216] Corsicans were numerous at Rome, where some of them were established as stock dealers[217] and their boats frequented the Roman port on the Tiber, Civitavecchia and Leghorn.[218] In Algiers there were hordes

[210] J. B. Tavernier, *op. cit.*, Persian Travels, p. 120.
[211] Museo Correr, D. delle Rose 21, f° 29.
[212] Comte de Brèves, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
[213] *Ibid.*, p. 15.
[214] Even today: for example the inhabitants of Djerba scattered throughout North Africa and indeed the whole world; or the gardeners from Malta and Mahon, P. Vidal de la Blache, *Principles of Human Geography*, p. 153.
[215] There was even a Sylvestre Corso on the lists of bombardiers of Goa in 1513, Fortunato de Almeida, *Historia de Portugal* 1926–29, III, p. 267.
[216] R. Russo, 'La politica agraria dell'officio di San Giorgio nella Corsica (1490–1553)' in *Riv. st. ital.*, 1934, p. 426.
[217] Carmelo Trasselli, *art. cit.*, in *Archivio storico di Corsica*, 1934, p. 577.
[218] At Leghorn, Mediceo 2908. Cf. the many Corsican boats carrying wine which arrived at Rome, H° de Torres to Zuñiga, Rome, 29th and 30th January, 1581, *Cartas y Avisos*, p. 33.

of Corsican immigrants, especially the *Capocorsini*. When Sampiero passed through the town in July, 1562, in the course of the dramatic voyage that was to take him to Constantinople, his compatriots rushed to the port to salute him as 'their king', according to a Genoese account.[219] How monstrous that this Sampiero, enemy of Genoa, friend of France, going to the Sultan to beg help for his compatriots, should have been popular and loved by his own people!

Who were these Corsicans at Algiers? Some of them were prisoners. Others, sailors and merchants, did business in the port. More than one settled there among the richest renegades of the town: Hasan Corso was after all one of the 'kings' of Algiers. In about 1568, a Spanish report[220] estimates that there were 6000 Corsican renegades out of a total renegade population of 10,000 in Algiers. The town was swarming with Corsican middlemen, effective agents for the ransoming of captives, according to Genoese documents, but also unofficial agents for foreign powers. There was the mysterious Francisco Gasparo Corso, for instance, who in theory was a resident of Valencia but spent the year 1569 in Algiers, where he had been sent by the viceroy of Valencia. He had conversations there with Euldj 'Alī, trying to persuade him, at the somewhat critical period of the war of Granada, of the best interests of the Catholic King. Who was he exactly, travelling under a name which is hardly one at all? We know that he came and went between Valencia and Algiers, with a brigantine and authorized merchandise, that is, other than the 'contraband' forbidden by Spanish law: salt, iron, saltpetre, gunpowder, oars, arms. He had one brother in Algiers, one or several others at Marseilles, another at Cartagena, and his correspondence with them thus covers the whole of the western Mediterranean. We might add to confuse matters even further, that in a legally sound declaration, drawn up before an impromptu lawyer in the prisons of Algiers, a Spanish prisoner accused Gasparo Corso of dealing in contraband and of being a double agent.[221] We cannot elucidate this little mystery, but might bear in mind the distribution of this extraordinary island family around the Mediterranean.

Other Corsicans were at Constantinople, Seville, and Valencia. But their favourite town, in the sixteenth century as today, was Marseilles, which

[219] He was to arrive at Constantinople in January, 1563. For his call at Chios, A.d.S. Genoa, *Sezione Segreta*, n.g. 5th June, 1563.
[220] Simancas E° 487.
[221] On Francisco Gasparo, see above Ch. I, n. 88. On the family and Francisco see the Count of Benavente (who had a very poor opinion of Corsicans) to H.M., Valencia, 13th November, 1569, Simancas E° 333. *Information hecha en Argel a 1° de junio 1570 a pedimo del cap. don Geronimo de Mendoça*, 13th June 1570, Simancas E° 334. Don Jeronimo de Mendoça to H.M. Valencia, 7th June, 1570, Simancas E° 334. Count of Benavente to H.M., Valencia, 8th July, 1570; Francisco is probably a double agent '. . . Estos son criados en Francia y tratan allí en Argel y Valencia y tienen su correspondancia en Marsella'. Finally letters from Francisco's brothers from Marseilles, dated 24th and 29th, July, with news from the Levant of no great interest (copy A.N., K 1553, B. 48, no. 77).

must have been almost half-Corsican, at least round the docks, if the documents we have are anything to go by.[222]

The Genoese rulers of the island cannot be either blamed for or absolved of this emigration. The obvious fact in the sixteenth century was that the Corsicans did not take kindly to Genoese rule. Whether or not this attitude was justified, it is quite unreasonable to attribute the exodus entirely to French intrigues and Valois gold. This is not to deny for a moment that there was a definite liaison between the island and France, or to doubt the overwhelming evidence of repeated journeys by French envoys and the dispatch of frigates, gunpowder and money to the island. France's policy towards Corsica was almost identical with that pursued more single-mindedly and with more resources, but less success, by Cosimo de' Medici. The point is – and it brings us back to our original subject – that if French policy succeeded, almost without trying, in stirring up the people of the Corsican mountains, it was less by virtue of any preconceived plans than because of the crucial link between a France that was rich in land and an island that was rich in men. France was open to Corsican emigration as the largest and most fruitful field for expansion, while Italy at the time was too populous itself and indeed regarded Corsica as a land to be colonized for its own use.

This is not to mention the considerable advantage to the Corsicans of the protection of the king of France which was very effective at sea. When they settled in Marseilles they became subjects of the French king, and as such participated in the rising fortunes of the port after the 1570s. In the seventeenth century we find Corsicans established in the *Bastion de France*, facing Tabarka, the Genoese island of the Lomellini, on that shore which one of their documents calls 'la costa che guardano li Francesi in Barberia'.[223] It is curious that on this coral-fishing coast the Corsicans should find their old enemy the *Dominante*, in the form of the fortress of Tabarka, before which Sanson Napollon was to perish in his attack of May, 1633.

Islands that the sea does not surround. In this Mediterranean world, excessively compartmented as it was, where human occupation had left vast empty stretches unfilled, not counting the seas, one might argue that there were places that were fully as much islands as those surrounded by the sea, isolated places, peninsulas – the word itself is significant – like Greece or other regions which were cut off on the mainland side and for whom the sea was the only means of communication. Bounded to the north by the mountain barrier marking its frontier with Rome, the kingdom

[222] On the Lenche and the great question of the coral, see besides P. Masson, *Les Compagnies du Corail*, 1908, the book by P. Giraud, *Les origines de l'Empire français nord-africain . . .*, 1939. On the role played at Marseilles by Thomas Corso, on behalf of the Corsican insurgents, many references in the correspondence of Figueroa, the Spanish ambassador at Genoa, and particularly Figueroa to the king, Genoa, 9th January, 1566, Simancas E° 1394.

[223] *Le Bastion de France*, Algiers, 1930, no. 1.

of Naples could be called an island in this sense. In the textbooks we find mention of the 'island' of the Maghreb, *Djezirat el Moghreb*, the Island of the Setting Sun, between the Atlantic, the Mediterranean, the Sea of the Syrtes, and the Sahara; a world of sudden contrasts, as Émile-Félix Gautier has pointed out.

One might say of Lombardy that it was in a way a continental island between the Alps and the Apennines, between rustic Piedmont and the half-Byzantine world of Venice. It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that Portugal, Andalusia, Valencia, and Catalonia were a series of peripheral islands attached to the Iberian mass through Castile. Note how Catalonia, opening on to the sea, was quick to trim her sails to the winds of history, at times looking to France, under the Carolingians and again later in the age of troubadours and courtly love; at other times towards the Mediterranean, in the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries; and finally in the eighteenth century towards the backward regions of the Peninsula, as yet not industrialized. As for Spain itself, Maurice Legendre has described it as a *plusqu'île*, more-than-an-island, by which he meant to emphasize its inaccessibility and original character.

At the other, eastern end of the Mediterranean, Syria was another island, a halfway house between sea and desert, a source from which many things were to flow: men, techniques, empires, civilizations, and religions. It gave the Mediterranean the alphabet, the art of glassmaking, purple dyes for cloth, and the secrets of dry-farming in Phoenician times; it provided first Rome and then Byzantium with emperors; its ships ruled over the Phoenician sea, the first, or almost the first Mediterranean in history; and finally in 1516 – as in 634 – it was through its conquest of this vital region that triumphant Islam (Arabs in the seventh century, Turks in the sixteenth) reached the stage of history.

We are now taking great liberties with the concept of insularity, of course, but in the interests of a better explanation. The Mediterranean lands were a series of regions isolated from one another,[224] yet trying to make contact with one another. So in spite of the days of travel on foot or by boat that separated them, there was a perpetual coming and going between them, which was encouraged by the nomadic tendencies of some of the populations. But the contacts they did establish were like electric charges, violent and without continuity. Like an enlarged photograph the history of the islands affords one of the most rewarding ways of approaching an explanation of this violent Mediterranean life. It may make it easier to understand how it is that each Mediterranean province has been able to preserve its own irreducible character, its own violently regional flavour in the midst of such an extraordinary mixture of races, religions, customs, and civilizations.

[224] A. Philippson, *op. cit.*, p. 32: 'Jedes Land ist ein Individuum für sich'. This is what J. W. Zinkeisen, *op. cit.*, III, p. 7, says of the bigger islands in the Archipelago: '. . . jedes für sich eine eigene Welt'.

The Peninsulas. The vital force of the sea does not carry in its wake only those fragments of land we call the islands, those thin ribbons we call the mainland coasts. It has repercussions reaching far into the land masses, effortlessly drawing into its orbit all the regions that look seawards, and none more than the vast peninsular blocks, particularly since they present to the intervening seas coasts of exceptional activity. The peninsulas are independent land masses: the Iberian peninsula, Italy, the Balkan peninsula, Asia Minor, North Africa, the last apparently attached to the African continent, but in fact separated from it by the width of the Sahara. What Theobald Fischer said of Iberia, 'It is a world in itself', is true of the other peninsulas, comparable worlds composed of identical pieces: the ever-present mountains, plains, plateaux, coastal strips, and strings of islands. Natural correspondences suggest themselves between both landscapes and ways of life. The words 'Mediterranean climate' or 'Mediterranean sky' conjure up brilliant images, almost all relating to these great land masses which are all, though in varying degrees, caught up by the sea. It is through these countries, especially Italy and Spain, that western travellers regularly get their first glimpse of the Mediterranean. And it would certainly be a mistake to follow them in letting such first impressions blind us to all but these privileged shores, as if they constituted the entire Mediterranean. They are certainly an essential part, but not the whole.

For between the peninsulas lie rather different intermediate regions: along the Gulf of Lions, Lower Languedoc and the lower Rhône valley forming a Dutch landscape; on the Adriatic, lower Emilia and the Venetias; further east, north of the Black Sea, the bare open lands that run from the Danube delta to the edge of the Caucasus; and lastly, in the south this time, the endless ribbon of blank coastline, where it is often difficult to land, stretching from southern Syria to Gabès and Djerba in Tunisia, the long barren front of a *foreign* world looking on to the Mediterranean.

Nonetheless, the peninsulas are the Mediterranean regions which are richest in men and in potential. They are key actors, who have always played leading roles, in turn gathering strength and then expending it. They are almost persons, to rephrase Michelet on France, but persons who may or may not be conscious of themselves. Their unity is obvious, but they do not have the coherence or self-confidence of say France under the Valois, nor the vehemence of its outbursts of political and national passion: for example, in 1540 when Montmorency, who favoured collaboration with the Habsburgs, was thrown from power;[225] or during the continuous crisis from 1570 to 1572, which the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew stopped but did not resolve; or even more striking, the crisis at the end of the century which led to the overwhelming triumph of Henri IV.

[225] No study exists of this national sentiment. Cf. the fine passion of Rabelais, *Gargantua*, ed. Les Belles Lettres 1955, p. 137, 'Par Dieu, je vous metroys en chien courtault les fuyards de Pavie'. And in the *Quart Livre*, ed. Les Belles Lettres, prologue, p. 11. 'Ce tant noble, tant antique, tant beau, tant florissant, tant riche royaume de France'.

But perhaps these peninsular units, defined as they are by nature, did not need to be willed into existence by men with the same passion as the more artificial unit of France.

Nevertheless, there is strong evidence of Spanish nationalism. In 1559 it lead to the debarring from high office of Philip II's non-Spanish advisers and inspired the much-repeated Spanish opinions of the Frenchmen of the day: unreliable, quarrelsome, argumentative, easily discouraged at the first setback, but impatient to wipe out a defeat or a concession. This Spanish nationalism was far from homogeneous or even widely expressed. It was only gradually as the years of greatness piled up one after another, that it came into the open, found its themes, and was enticed by the mirage of the idea of empire. In this composite form nationalism became widespread, not in the reigns of Charles V and Philip II, who were its architects, but late in the seventeenth century, when the empire was already in decline, in the reign of the 'Planet' king, Philip IV, and his adviser, the Count Duke of Olivares, in the age of Velásquez, Lope de Vega, and Calderon.

There was no such coherence in Italy. And yet there too appeared an undeniable form of nationalism, or at any rate a pride in being Italian, in the sense that every Italian firmly believed that he belonged to the most civilized of societies with the most glorious of heritages. Was the present so unworthy either? 'From morning to night we hear that the New World was discovered by the Spanish and Portuguese, whereas it was we, the Italians, who showed them the way,' writes Bandello at the beginning of one of his *novelle*.[226] The historian di Tocco has given us an exhaustive account of the complaints and anger aroused in the Italian patriots (ahead of their time) by the end of peninsular liberty after the treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis, and the final victory of the Spaniards.[227] And how can one ignore the many dreams of unity: the passionate appeals of Machiavelli; or Guicciardini's presentation of the years he had just lived through as a single pageant of Italian history?[228] Rare as they are, these are unmistakable signs of feelings of national consciousness and unity.

Another and even more important sign (for national identity is not confined to politics) was the spread of the Tuscan language. Similarly the Castilian language spread over the whole Iberian peninsula in the sixteenth century, and became the language of literary expression used by Aragonese writers from the time of Charles V. It was in Castilian that an Aragonese nobleman, a contemporary of Philip II, kept his family record book.[229] It even reached literary circles in Lisbon in the great period of Camoëns. At the same time it was adopted by all the upper classes throughout Spain, and with it, not only the literary themes of Castile, but also its religious themes and forms of worship. Witness the curious story of St. Isidore, the

[226] M. Bandello, *op. cit.*, II, p. 208.
[227] Vittoria Di Tocco, *Ideali d'indipendenza in Italia*, 1926, p. 1 ff.
[228] A. Renaudet, *Machiavel*, 1942, p. 10.
[229] *Algunes efemerides* by Miguel Pérez de Nueros, in: Fro. Belda y Pérez de Nueros, marqués de Cabra, *Felipe Secundo* (1927), p. 30 ff.

peasant saint of Madrid, who displaced, even in Catalonia, the traditional peasant saints, St. Abdon and St. Sennen, who were the patrons of many confraternities. Statues of them still stand in all old churches, but the peasants of Catalonia forsook them in the seventeenth century for the new arrival.[230]

This directs attention to the coherence of the historical areas within the peninsular boundaries. These boundaries were by no means impassable. It is mistaken to talk of 'electric' frontiers, such as Ramón Fernandez imagined surrounding Spain. Such frontiers never existed, along the Pyrenees or the Alps, any more than along the Danube, in the Balkans, or on the mountains of Armenia, an outstanding region for roads and ethnic mixtures, the Taurus mountains, the Atlas and the Sahara, south of North Africa. Nevertheless, the peninsulas are bordered on the mainland side, from which they project, by obstacles that have hindered relations and exchanges. This in turn should not be underestimated. Paraphrasing Metternich's famous remark, Augustin Renaudet said of Italy in the sixteenth century, with its many divisions and uncertain contours, in the direction of Piedmont for instance, that it was merely a geographical expression.[231] But is that so insignificant? It is a representation of a historical entity within which events had similar repercussions and effects, and were indeed in a sense imprisoned, struggling against but not always overcoming the barriers of its frontiers.

For Gioacchino Volpe this is more or less what is meant by Italian unity. The same could be said of Iberia. The dramatic history of the Moslem conquest and the reconquest which lay at the centre of its life for seven centuries was trapped within its frontiers. This was what forged its basic unity, and enabled it to transform its borrowings from outside: to accept Gothic art from Europe, but to overlay it with the embellishments of the plateresque and Moorish art; later to take over the Baroque, from which it produced the *churriguerismo*. Just as North Africa, when invaded by Islam, lent it its own particular accent and gradually allowed itself to be 'de-Islamized, de-Orientalized, Berberized' by its Marabouts.[232]

The high barriers closing off the peninsulas have made each of them a marginal world with its own characteristics, flavours, and accents.[233]

Every time the political unity of a peninsula has been achieved, it has announced some momentous change. In ancient times the unification of Greece by the Macedonians and the unification of Italy round Rome had far-reaching consequences. At the beginning of the sixteenth century

[230] *Geografia general de Catalunya*, p. 426 ff.

[231] A. Renaudet, *L'Italie et la Renaissance italienne* (Lecture given at the Sorbonne, Sedes, 1937, p. 1).

[232] Augustin Berque, 'Un mystique moderne' in *2e Congrès des Soc. sav. d'Afrique du Nord*, Tlemcen, 1936 (Algiers 1938) vol. II, p. 744. Similar observation by R. Montagne, *op. cit.*, p. 410.

[233] On the orginality of the Balkans arising from their Eurasian situation cf. Busch-Zantner, *op. cit.*, p. IV; their foreignness to westerners, *ibid.*, p. 111. On the unity of Asia Minor, a second Iberian peninsula cf. Ulrich von Hassel, *Das Drama des Mittelmeers*, 1940, p. 22.

Ferdinand and Isabella set about forging the unity of Spain: it was to be an explosive force.

For if the peninsulas have been partly cut off from the continental mainlands of Europe, Asia, and Africa, they have made up for it by their accessibility from the seaward side, so that when strong they have been able to launch aggression, but when poorly defended they have been easily conquered.

Is this the reason for their curious tendency to join together in pairs? Although Italy once dominated all the others in the days of Rome, because she was mistress of the sea, her exceptional achievement was never repeated. In general, conquests from peninsula to peninsula were not so far-reaching. They were more often comparable to the boarding of one ship by another: for example the action that enabled Asia Minor to seize the vast Balkan peninsula at the end of the fourteenth century and beginning of the fifteenth, preparing the way for the great Turkish conquest; or the even more rapid triumph of North Africa over the Iberian peninsula at the beginning of the eighth century. So there came into being, sometimes for long periods, the bi-continents mentioned earlier: Anatolia and the Balkans, first at the time of Byzantium and then under the Turkish Empire; North Africa and Iberia in the Middle Ages, a solid association[234] but one which the break of 1492 damaged for centuries (it was such a fruitful association, however, that it never totally vanished). In the century to which this book is devoted, two further boarding actions occurred: between Spain and Italy, whose union, sealed in 1559, was to last a century in spite of the intervening space of the western Mediterranean and the hostilities it encountered;[235] and between the Balkans and the masterless boat that was North Africa, for the Turks, as we know, only partly controlled it.

These liaisons and partnerships, successively created and destroyed,

[234] 'North Africa will always be controlled by the Iberian peninsula and its islands', P. Achard, *Barberousse*, *op. cit.*, p. 53, no. 1. 'The Iberian world appears inseparable from the Atlas lands, up to and including the Canaries and even the large islands in the western Mediterranean, Sardinia and Corsica', P. Vidal de la Blache, *Tableau géographique de la France*, p. 28. 'Andalusia . . . appears as an extension of the *Maghreb*', George Marçais, *Histoire du Moyen Age*, III, 1936, p. 396 (in *Histoire générale by* Gustave Glotz).

[235] Von Hassel, *op. cit.*, p. 20–22, sees Spain's intrusion into Italy as more dynastic than political in character (in the sense of a dynastic policy). This is questionable. For the cultural links see the works of Benedetto Croce. For Spain's contribution to the institutional framework, see Fausto Niccolini, *Aspetti della vita Italo-spagnuola nel Cinque e Seicento*, Naples 1934. On literary relations, Hugues Vaganay, 'L'Espagne et l'Italie' in *Rev. Hispanique*, vol. IX, 1902. Leopold von Ranke, *Les Osmanlis et la monarchie espagnole pendant les XVIe et XVIIIe siècles*, 1839, p. 383–387. W. Platzhoff, *Geschichte des europäischen Staatensystems*, 1928, p. 32, sees the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis as sealing Italy's fate. What this list of books does not perhaps sufficiently convey is that the Italian peninsula found it necessary to remain attached to Spain for both economic reasons (American silver) and military reasons (protection against the Turks). It would be inaccurate simply to talk as Stendhal does (*Promenades dans Rome*, II, p. 191) of the 'invasion (of Italy) by Spanish despotism'.

summarize the history of the sea. By turns conquerors and conquered, the peninsulas were preparing, during the quiet periods of their existence, explosions to come. For example, before the conquest of Spain in the eighth century there was an increase in the population of the Maghreb; similarly, much later, before the Turkish conquest of the Balkans, Asia Minor was becoming progressively overpopulated and there seems to have been a transition from a nomadic way of life to a semi-sedentary one, which in itself is significant. By contrast, all conquests lead to exhaustion. When the Roman Empire had completed the monstrous conquest of all the lands of the Mediterranean, the Italian population began to decline. So political supremacy passed from one peninsula to another and along with it supremacy in other fields, economic and cultural. But these transfers did not all take place simultaneously. It was seldom that one peninsula combined preeminence in all fields at any one time. So it is impossible to classify these constantly changing societies in relation to each other. Can we say that certain peninsulas were more powerful, more brilliant, or more advanced than others? It is difficult to give an answer. Take the Maghreb, for instance. It has not always been the eternal laggard described in the books of Émile-Félix Gautier; it has had its moments of splendour, even of supremacy. One could hardly dismiss the civilization of Carthage as trivial, nor the conquests of Spain in the eighth century, Sicily in the ninth century, and Egypt in the tenth. From a religious point of view, North Africa in the time of Apuleius and St. Augustine was the stoutest pillar of the Christian church and Latin culture. Italy at the time was incomparably less well endowed.[236]

An interesting hypothesis, hastily formulated on the occasion of some important excavations on Malta by L. M. Ugolini,[237] suggests that Mediterranean civilization may not have originated in the East, as has always been supposed, but in the West, in Spain and North Africa, well before the second millennium preceding the Christian era. From Spain and North Africa this civilization might then have spread to Italy and the East. Then and only then would the movement have flowed back westwards. Even if the suggested route is not correct it is pleasant to imagine this relay race along the coasts and roads of the sea, the torch passing from island to island, peninsula to peninsula, returning after hundreds or thousands of years to places where it burnt once before, but never with the same flame.

This is fanciful perhaps, but in the long night of the past, one physical law seems to have operated more or less regularly. It is easy to imagine and even probable that the life of the sea, a vital force, would first of all have taken control of the smallest and least weighty fragments of land, the islands and coastal margins, tossing and turning them at its will, as the northern waves toss the shingle.[238] Growing more powerful and compelling, this force would draw into its orbit the larger land masses, the peninsulas, elevating the history of the sea to a higher level. And the greatest moments of all would be when it was strong enough to attract towards it the great continental blocs: moments that saw Caesar in Gaul, Germanicus beyond the Elbe, Alexander on the Indus, the Arabs in China, or the Moroccans on the Niger.

[236] E. Albertini, in *Mélanges Paul Thomas*, Bruges, 1930.
[237] L. M. Ugolini, *Malta, origini della civiltà mediterranea*, Rome, 1934.
[238] A. Philippson, *Das Mittelmeergebiet, op. cit.*, p. 37.

At such moments, the historical Mediterranean seems to be a concept capable of infinite extension. But how far in space are we justified in extending it? This is a difficult and controversial question; but if we are seeking to explain the history of the Mediterranean, it is perhaps the fundamental question we should be asking.