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ARBEITSPAPIERE ZUR EUROPÄISCHEN ZIVILGESELLSCHAFT / EUROPEAN CIVIL SOCIETY WORKING PAPERS

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SARRAH KASSEM
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Europe and the Mediterranean

Talking, Learning, Working, and Living Together

3

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TALKING, LEARNING, WORKING, AND LIVING TOGETHER
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A Conference in Heraklion/Crete, Greece
24th to 27th April, 2017

Conference Report and Papers (Part 1)

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Welcoming Address by the Governor of Crete

by Stavros Arnaoutakis

Dear Members of the University Community, Dear Mr. Minister, Dear Mr. Ikonomou, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very happy to welcome you to Heraklion. We welcome you to a city with century-long history, a history associated to the Mediterranean and to the common tradition of south-eastern Europe.

It is very important that the conference begins today, in the historical building of St. Mark's basilica, since, through the history of this city, the title of the conference takes life and is transformed into historical reality.

As a space and place of memories and modern challenges, the Mediterranean acquires its essence, though the historical times of Heraklion and Crete.

Heraklion – later known as "the Khandak" of the Arabs and the Venetians and "the Big Castle" of the Byzantines – was the birthplace of the first European civilization, which flourished in Crete (it was the Minoan civilization of Crete that lent the name "Europe" to our continent), and birthplace to important personalities of the arts, letters and culture.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

it has been almost 22 years since the historic summit of Barcelona in 1995, when the Declaration of Barcelona was adopted, marking the beginning of the dialogue and the promotion of cooperation policies between the two parts of the Mediterranean, that is, the member states of the E.U. and the rest of the countries along the southern coast of the Mediterranean.

That was the first time that countries with special historical and cultural roots gathered around the same table, with the signs of political and other conflicts among them still visible. The purpose of that summit was the will of the countries involved to participate in a process, which would be based on four pillars:

peace, security, welfare and stability. Since then, the E.U. and its policies implemented for the Mediterranean area have been further developed and propagated.

Within this new environment, the Region of Crete plays an important role by participating in European-Mediterranean networks, by developing bilateral relations with other European regions and by trying to consolidate an atmosphere of peace, cooperation and solidarity among the peoples of the Mediterranean.

Taking into consideration everything mentioned above, we have undertaken the organization of a big part of an important conference featuring university professors from 21 countries, and this was possible through the decisive contribution of *Dr. Eleftherios Ikonomou*, who we would like to congratulate on the said organization of the conference.

Greece is a country that "lives in the sea", having the longest coastline in the Mediterranean and the largest number of islands, as compared to the rest of the Mediterranean states. The sea is an important element of our identity, whose roots are traced back far into the centuries. Starting from the ancient Phoenicia and extending to the borders of the then known world (the area now known as "Gibraltar") and, through maritime paths, Greeks have developed bonds of friendship and co-operation with other peoples, cultures and religions. Those bonds of my country also constitute a guarantee for sustainability, especially under the given current circumstances. Greece does not only live "in the sea", it also lives "from the sea".

The current period is extremely critical for the countries of the Mediterranean, as a result of all those turbulences brought about by the Arab Spring, of the painful impacts of civil wars within the broader area and of the outbreak of the refugee influx; hence, we bear great responsibility before such huge challenges, as autonomous parts of a wider region and it is imperative that we deal with problems such as:

- The humanitarian crisis and migration
- The climate change
- The environmental burden of the Mediterranean Sea

At the same time, based on our common historic memories, we have to mutually meet great challenges, such as:

- The transformation of Europe in a commercial crossroads for 3 continents
- The establishment of the Mediterranean area as a zone for the interception of the threats that emerge within its perimeter.
- The transformation of the Mediterranean as a source of energy resource diversification for the E.U.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

above all, the Mediterranean Sea is a space for the essential interaction among different identities, cultures and political priority-setting, a place of common effort to develop a new geography for the Mediterranean; a geography of peace, security, stability and cooperation. We are working step by step, with the aim of converting our Mediterranean neighborhood into a sea that could bridge any gaps, through dialogue, knowledge and mutual understanding.

I am convinced that the conference, which is beginning today in Heraklion, will contribute to that direction, bringing together common worries and visions and opening-up new prospects for the European-Mediterranean cooperation.

Concluding my speech, I would like to wish that the Mediterranean could once more become – apart from its being the natural bridge between three continents – the crossroads for cultural, human and economic exchanges and an essential factor for the achievement of peace and security in Europe.

Thank you!

Introduction[1]

by Rupert Graf Strachwitz[2]

> *"The island of Crete forms a natural stepping stone between Europe and Africa, and between Europe and Asia; but whereas there are many stepping stones for the latter interval, Crete is the only convenient link between Europe and Egypt. It was no accident therefore that this island became the medium for the transmission of cultural influences from the older civilizations of the Near and Middle East to barbarian Europe, and that the first civilization that we can term European was that of Crete."*

This quotation from a book by the British archaeologist Richard Wyatt Hutchinson, published in 1962, refers the 2nd millenium before Christ – before the common era. But it would still seem extraordinarily appropriate that we should meet in Crete to discuss the Mediterranean as a memory space and what this may mean for the future.

The Maecenata Foundation, based in Germany, focusses on civil society and philanthropy, transcultural dialogue, and the big project of Europe. We feel very strongly that much more needs to be done, both academically and in the field, on all these counts. Therefore, in 2012, a programme was launched that we called Europa Bottom-Up, and in the context of this programme, we devised a project we call Europe and the Mediterranean. The initial framework for this project was a collaborative effort with the Secretary General and staff of the German-Italian Centre for European Excellence at Villa Vigoni in Italy, and the first two conferences were held there in 2013 and 2015[3]. We are extremely happy to be able to continue our discussions in Heraklion this year.

[1] This introduction is based on the address given at the opening session of the 3rd Europe and the Mediterranean conference, organized by the Maecenata Foundation, Heraklion, 24th April, 2017.
[2] Dr. Rupert Graf Strachwitz is the Executive Director of the Maecenata Foundation.
[3] The proceeds of these conferences are published as: Udo Steinbach, Rupert Graf Strachwitz, Piero Antonio Rumignani (Eds.): Europe and the Mediterranean – Talking, Learning, Working, and Living Together 1, EBU No. 11, Berlin: Maecenata Stiftung 2015, http://www.maecenata.eu/images/2015_EBU_11.pdf / Udo Steinbach, Rupert Graf Strachwitz, Piero Antonio Rumignani (Eds.): Europe and the Mediterranean – Talking, Learning, Working, and Living Together 2, EBU No. 12, Berlin: Maecenata Stiftung 2015, http://www.maecenata.eu/images/2015_EBU_12.pdf

This year's topic was the subject of much discussion among the preparatory team that included *Prof. Dr. Udo Steinbach*, director of the Governance Center Middle East | North Africa / Humboldt-Viadrina Governance Platform, *Dr. Eleftherios Ikonomou*, director of Arts Etc. – Intercultural Dialogues, *Pierantonio Rumignani*, economist and banker, my colleague *Fides Sachs*, and myself. It was also discussed with a number of other friends and colleagues, and with the funders of this conference. There were doubts, of course, whether looking at our common past was an adequate tool to grasp our turbulent present and give us an added value to shape our future. In the end, we all agreed it would. What we have in mind is not a nostalgic look into the past! Rather, it is an assessment of our common cultural background, in order that we may focus more on what we have in common and less on what divides us.

Our points of reference are

1. Europe without the Mediterranean is not the cultural space we thrive for.
2. In times of crisis like the one we are living through today, we need to look beyond the immediate next step and start constructing the bridges that will carry us into our common future.
3. We must spend more time on our commonalities, our common cultural heritage for one, and stop just harping on what divides us.
4. All this is much too important to leave it to governments. We, the people, our civil society organisations, must take the lead and set the agenda.

All this brings us together, forty-odd experts from 16 countries, of all ages, and from many walks of life, academics, practitioners, activists, and experienced observers. Some have attended our previous conferences and will bring continuity and sustainability to the table, while others are new to this format and will hopefully argue for disruptive innovation.

The Maecenata Foundation is a small think tank with an international network of like-minded friends, but with very limited resources. The network has been extraordinarily helpful in identifying the right delegates and fine-tuning the programme. Still, this conference would never have happened, were it not for the generous invitation graciously extended by the government of Crete, and by

Governor *Stavros Arnaoutakis* in particular. Above all, however, it is the fantastic support and encouragement accorded us by the Goelet Foundation of New York City that has made this event possible. The conference is honoured by having Mr. and Mrs. *John and Henrietta Goelet* among its delegates. We are also grateful to the Lazord Foundation for organizing and funding one final session. Their long and impressive track record of encouragement, empowerment, and aid for the cause of peace and understanding in the Near and Middle East, and the welfare of our Palestinian friends in particular, made them see how important meetings like this one are, and enabled us to convene it. It was they who insisted that we face the issue whether looking at past at all was a relevant exercise head-on. For this reason, the question asked in the first session will be: "Fiddling while Rome burns?" Are we heirs to Nero, the Roman Emperor, who is said to have watched his capital burning while enjoying himself playing the fiddle? Or have we learnt a lesson from those intellectuals who sat down in small circles both in Germany and in exile in the midst of the horrors of Nazi dictatorship and the 2nd World War and made plans for the day when all this would have come to an end and the time of rebuilding would arrive. I feel certain, this is the spirit that brings us here.

Through geography and history, Europe and the Mediterranean are destined to talk, learn, work, and live together, in the future as much as in the past. It seems appropriate, nay necessary, to make an effort to single out some experiences and lessons that will help create the kind of future we would all wish to have. This is why the title for this conference was chosen: Remember for the Future – The Mediterranean as a Memory Space.

Fiddling While Rome Burns?

by Udo Steinbach

I admit to feeling like being in the party Giovanni Boccaccio, the famous Italian author of the Decamerone, describes in the 14th century. While the black death is raging in Florence, a group of young men and women has left the city and assembles in a beautiful garden setting. In order to distract themselves from the gruesome reality and at the same time to entertain themselves in an intelligent and cultivated way they start telling stories. When the plague is over and they return to Florence, they will have narrated 100 stories, which remain immortal up to our days. The contents of the stories cover life as it has been, is, and always will be. One of the messages is to be optimistic that life is stronger than adverse things and catastrophies that happen from time to time.

In parallel, our group that met two years ago at Villa Vilgoni is now meeting in Crete; both places are quite removed from the dramas and tragedies which are happening day by day, and most particularly in the Mediterranean. While refugees and migrants take the risk to reach the European shores, while human beings are drowning, while courageous women and men are risking their lives to rescue people in distress, our group has withdrawn for 48 hours to – in a way – tell stories related to the Mediterranean, its history, present and future. Do we expect to have an impact on real life? Or are we fiddling while Rome is burning?

In any case, we would not have come together in so called normal times. For many decades, the illusion spread that conditions were stable and would not change; that a policy called the Barcelona process would lead somewhere, and would contribute to development and stability for all peoples around the Mediterranean. None of these dreams has come true! Times are not normal; and crossroads lie ahead. Obviously, we had deceived ourselves; we had turned our eyes away from reality, while in many places around the Mediterranean things behind the facade of normality and stability had begun exploding in disruption. The crisis was not only to do with the southern shores of the Mediterranean, but with Europe as well. Rarely since the 19th century, when Europe embarked on

a colonial and imperialist venture in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, Hamlet's cry has been so much to the point: "The world is out of joint".

People who cruise the Mediterranean from the South to the North tell us that the Mediterranean is out of joint, too. And they teach us that we are – literally – all sitting in the same boat. Any man, woman or child that loses his or her life in the sea spells defeat for Europe. And any refugee who manages to reach Europe's shores is a challenge to us to reorganize constructively the political, economic, and social order in the Mediterranean space at large in a way which provides all its people with a solid base to stay, live and thrive in the places where they are born.

As organizers of the meeting here in Heraklion we have put a certain emphasis on memory. We thought it would be necessary to recall what sort of myths and narratives have determined the past, so as to see which of them and to what extent they determine the present. Memories underpin the common ground which we may build upon. That is why we chose the title: "Remember for the Future – The Mediterranean As a Memory Space." What is going on in and around the Mediterranean at the present time is indeed the most radical rupture and challenge since the end of the Roman Empire and the Muslim conquest of North Africa in the 7th century. What is needed to meet this challenge, is nothing less than to reeinvent the political, economic and social setting between the North and the South as well as within both sides of the sea. First and foremost, this requires a change of perception. Post-colonialist encounters were based on an exclusive perception seeing Europe on one and the "Islamic" states and societies on the other side of the Mediterranean. (Israel had constantly posed a dilemma as it failed to integrate within its muslim neighbourhood and considered itself part of Europe.) The beginning of the Arab revolt in 2010/11 and the deep crisis of the EU since 2008 have changed the parameters of the encounter: the solution will be the result of a common effort based on an inclusive perception. This means a commitment to comprehensive change on all sides. What matters, is not the cultural and religious differences. What matters first and foremost, is to enable equal access to social, economic, political and environmental resources for everybody. The real clash is not between Christians and Muslims, secular and religious, but between rich and poor, powerful and oppressed.

If this is true, the Mediterranean and its shores are the testing ground for a new order, perhaps not world-wide, but certainly one for Europe and its Middle Eastern, North African and sub-saharan neighbors, including of course our Palestinian friends. The present situation with its chaotic appearance between Libya and the Persian Gulf prevents us from fully understanding what the agenda will be. The revolt that began in 2010/11 is still very much at its beginning. There were hardly any radicals or dschihadis, when the masses took to the street, ignited by the desire to live in political and social orders which pay respect to the dignity of the individual. The reason why the dramatic movement ran into stalemate was that there were no democrats around. You cannot have democracy without democrats. It is an experience European people made after World War One, Germany in particular. The first attempt to establish a democratic system ended up in the greatest disaster of Europe's history. Who indeed could have taught the political elites in the Middle East how democratic institutions work? The democracies in the Arab world after the end of the Ottoman Empire were instrumentalized by European colonial powers. And the second Arab revolt started by Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt, which lasted for nearly two decades, ended up in despotism and corruption. Making security their prime goal, Europe (and others) cooperated with the regimes in power!

Today, obsessed by the dschihadi movements, Europeans once again are running the risk of falling into a trap. Dschihadism is not a challenge in itself. It results from numerous mistakes, shortcomings and lack of good governance. The target of the brutal, senseless actions are Muslim and non-muslim societies alike. The most efficient way to fight this phenomenon is to forge an alliance between Muslims and non-muslims, an alliance based on common values - ethical and moral as well as political and social. Fighting a barbaric ideology and their executors together should be considered a first, but extremely urgent step in the right direction: to make an inclusive perception meaningful. The future of the Mediterranean and the wider adjacent areas can only be thought as a common future. And its implementation must be based on mutual respect and equal footing.

The Syrian tragedy provides us with a clue, why fiddling while Rome is burning is sometimes more than just a privilege of a few elitists in an ivory tower. The fate of Syria and its people has been forged by political forces within and outside the country, who follow their very own interests and agendas. Innumerable conferences and fora do not seriously envisage peace and a good life for the Syrians. Many players have in mind what they might gain from a "solution". The fiddlers are not those who set Rome on fire. Withdrawing to – sometimes beautiful – places their task is to figure out a roadmap based on principles pertaining to human values and the rule of law. The fiddlers do not act and talk in a spectacular way; instead of short term interests they have in mind the comprehensive and complex perspectives within which problems may be settled and conflicts may be resolved.

In summing up, I would like to shed light on one other dimension of encounters between the shores of the Mediterranean: the arts and literature. The novel, the film and the theatre have become vehicles to critically deal with shades of life anywhere in the Mediterranean. Inumerable fora provide opportunities for an intense exchange of thoughts and feelings between artists, poets and performers from all parts of the Mediterranean. The recent crisis in the Arab world has unleashed an unprecedented multiplicity of occasions to meet each other and perform jointly. To present just two examples: Nidal Chamekh (born in 1985) is a painter of Tunisian background; at the moment, he lives in Paris. He participated in the 56th Biennale in Venice. One of his paintings was recently featured in the arts section of a leading German newspaper. Here is an extract of what he had to say:

> *"Bertolt Brecht once said, the subject of art was that the world is out of joint. I believe this is correct. We know the world mostly as desaster and disorder. We are living in trembling times. All the more do I try to fix moments of truth. The Mediterranean at all times has been a theatre of dominance and subjugation, of conflicts, uprisings and expulsion. Think of the eternal struggle between Rome and Cartage, think of colonisation. During my studies, I moved from Tunis to Paris. Since I commute between the two countries, I sense the history of the Mediterranean equally more intensly and more objectively. Time as a circle, life*

> *as a journey: Who could better understand this than the evicted people who managed to overcome the barriers."*

The second example I use to illustrate the intensity of encounters across the Mediterranean in the arts pertains to a place hardly known to any of you: Mühlheim an der Ruhr. For many decades, the director of the theatre, Dr. Roberto Ciulli (of Italian origin), has been working in the framework of what he calls the Silk Road Project with theatres anywhere between Casablanca and Teheran. While we are sitting here, he has organized a venture called "The Mediterranean as a Theatre Landscape". From April 21st to 29th, a number of exciting events will be put on: theatre performances, lectures, other performances, concerts etc. Artists will be arriving from Tunisia, Italy, Spain, Iraq, Syria and Turkey. Let us hear what Dr. Ciulli say to advertise the event:

> *"Once more this event relates to the political realities with the means of the theatre. The Tunisian National Theater inaugurates the Festival showing the first performance of the new production by Fadhel Laibi, which he has simply called "peur(s)", "fear", "anguish", or "anxiety" in English, sensed even in the only country, which was able to transform the "Arab spring" into a republic. The subject of fear also prevails in the Spanish video perfomance "Tres Dias Sin Charlie" (Three days without Charlie), which takes its subject from the reactions in the social networks after the attack against "Charlie Hebd" in Paris. The destructive potential, which even one single man harbours within himself, is the subject of "Socrate il Sopravissuto" (Socrates the Survivor), performed by the Italian group Anagoor. "Your love is fire" is the title of a scenic lecture by Mudar Alhaggi, presented by a team of Syrian artists, in residence at the theatre in Mühlheim since the beginning of 2017. An Iraqi group will perform "Body Revolution" and "Waiting"; both deal with the situation of the theatre producers in exile. The festival ends with a modern version of the Euripides' drama of Medea by Emma Dante, the charismatic directrice and key figure of the Sicilian and Italian theatre. What could be more topical than the bloody tragedy of the refugee from Kolchis. Emma Dante, in her performance, leaves no doubt that it is the fire of Mediterranean passion which ignites Medea, deluded by her husband."*

The two examples, Nidal Chamekh and the theatre in Mühlheim, beside reflecting the common inspiration of the Mediterranean space in the arts, demonstrate how memory relates to the present. Chamekh evokes Rom and Carthage and colonisation as a paradigm of power and humiliation to be overcome; Roberto Ciulli and Emma Dante evoke the myth of Medea, a woman who defends herself against humiliation by her husband. Memory reloads the myth with the aim to improve our eye-sight for the challenges of today and the future: fiddling while Rome is burning.

Politics & Religion

by Costa Carras

Our conference, in one of its aspects at least, concerns the relationship between Europe and the Mediterranean, a sea around which, since the seventh century of our common era, two dominant religions, very different although sharing common roots, have interacted, both creatively and destructively. Today however there is a general tendency to look at the region in the light of the dominant political, philosophical and scientific developments in northern Europe since the sixteenth or seventeenth century. The impression is widespread that whereas a large part of the Mediterranean, mainly countries on its northern shore, has, broadly speaking, adopted the democratic, open society model of north-west Europe, another large segment of Mediterranean countries has not. In Europa Nostra we have, over the decades, given close attention to the need to respect the cultural heritage of "the other" located on the soil of member states of the Council of Europe, which is the region Europa Nostra has always covered. None of us however can deny, that however necessary and however beneficial our activities, they do not and cannot contribute to the resolution of what appears to many people today the central issue, namely whether there is a fundamental antithesis, not so much between Islam and Christianity as between the political and religious culture of countries with a Muslim tradition compared with those of a non-Muslim tradition in the Mediterranean and indeed in the world at large.

At one level, there is an easy response, which I can illustrate from a story of my own childhood. I began my schooling in the US during World War II and in only two years, between 1944 and 1946, absorbed the message that democracy, taught as an American creation in its modern representative form, although admittedly growing from English roots, was the wave of the future and would prevail in the world at large after the war had ended. That indeed was the fundamental lesson intended to be drawn from history lessons at my New York primary school.

In 1946, my parents brought me back to London. In my first term at school there my history teacher expounded a very different view. As our class obediently took notes he emphasised that only Protestant countries could be secure and stable democracies. In English schoolrooms, unlike American at that time, children did not answer back, but I put up my hand and demanded, "What about France, sir?" Mr Smith was not amused. He strode down to my desk and, standing over me, said, "As you will learn, when you grow up and learn some history, Carras, France has been a very insecure democracy indeed – and a main reason has been the Roman Catholic Church. In fact, were it not for Protestants and freethinkers France might not have become a democracy at all." There was little an eight-year old could say in response about France, as our history teacher strode back to his desk. When he turned around again however, he saw my arm raised once more. "What about Belgium, sir?" This time he exploded. "Belgium," he shouted, "Belgium … is the exception that proves the rule!"

An obvious parallel is to imagine some Western European classroom today where a teacher, more or less consciously influenced by Samuel Huntington, has been explaining that Muslim countries, rather than Roman Catholic as in the London of 1946, cannot be secure or stable democracies, only to be confronted by an eight-year old from a Buddhist family, perhaps from Sri Lanka or Thailand, with an equally decisive and derisive question: "What about Tunisia, sir?"

This episode from my own life serves both to put an end to such exchanges in their more usual form and to open a whole new range of discussion in another form. It is the end of the discussion in its simplistic or "stereotypic" form. Many, many factors go into determining whether a country becomes what we call a "democracy", or what my teacher called "a secure democracy", both of which phrases conceal as much as they reveal, since what we describe as "democracy" includes features such as, for instance, the rule of law and the separation of powers, which do not automatically flow from the Greek words "δήμος" and "κράτος" that make up the word "democracy". First, religious beliefs are only one factor among many in determining political forms of organisation. Second, it is of course perfectly possible for a majority of citizens of any country to hold simultaneously two seemingly antithetical sets of assumptions in the

religious and political spheres. One need say no more to conclude that our problem must never be expressed simplistically in terms of a particular religious belief being consistent or antithetical to "democratic values", however defined. Thus, a good deal of the widespread use of the democratic card to disparage one or another religion, today most frequently Islam, is misplaced.

In fact, prior to the last two decades, when it has been Islam that has received the most attention, every Christian tradition, except the Calvinist, has been accused of being antithetical to democracy at some time or another. The Calvinist tradition can hardly be so accused since it was from amongst independent congregationalist Calvinists during and after the English Civil War of 1645-1649 and among the Levellers in particular, that clearly democratic sentiments first came to be expressed after the ancient Hellenic world. It was over a century later in the American colonies, before, during and after the revolt against British rule, that, if always with great attention being paid to safeguards against the concentration of power in the hands of any single person, or alternatively in the hands of the mass of people as a whole, a new emphasis on the necessity for a greatly increased "popular element" in government became strong enough that we can legitimately speak of a move towards democracy, slaves and women always excepted.

Not only did this development take a full century, but as we have been recently and forcibly reminded, in the United States constitutional order still takes priority over democracy in the narrow sense of majority rule. Four times since 1828, when popular election to the Presidency was effectively established in practice, that is once in every twelve elections, the electoral college has given a majority to the candidate who obtained fewer votes nationally. On each occasion, this has been to the advantage of the economically more conservative party, namely the Republicans (1876; 1888; 2000; 2016).

More important however, where attitudes which today would be considered anti-democratic are concerned, Calvinism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had a rigidly exclusive stance against any type of "other", whether this other was Roman Catholics or peoples of another religion, slaves, or the natives

of any colony whose natural resources were under intensive exploitation by themselves, seen as the people of God.

That having been said, two things remain true. First, that few religions in general, with the notable exception to some degree of primitive Christianity, has to date distinguished itself by generosity towards those who do not share their convictions, and, second, that it was indeed from within the Calvinist and later the Anglican and Nonconformist traditions that modern representative democracy developed. By contrast, in many countries, more specifically France and Spain, Roman Catholicism most vigourously opposed those arguing either for a higher degree of liberty or for popular participation in government. So there is indeed good reason, while avoiding stereotyping, to subject to careful examination the relationship between each major religious tradition, whether Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu or Buddhist, and the ancient Hellenic and modern Western democratic political legacy.

The same is perhaps even more true of modern secular ideologies. Some have been closely related to the re-emergence of democracy in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; others have been antithetical, to the point indeed of fierce hostility. Such for instance has been the case with National Socialism and Bolshevik Communism, two of the world's most powerful ideologies in the twentieth century. Where political, as opposed to economic, liberties are concerned, Chinese Communism in the twenty-first century follows the same tradition of hostility to what we today broadly describe as "democratic values". It is thus by no means only religious faiths that have sometimes been antithetical to representative democracy. Furthermore, the differences between the attitudes of different religious and secular groups in relation to democracy are as interesting as the similarities.

I suggest we extend our discussion of this issue by using *Dimitris Stefanakis*' talk, "Culture of Memories" to ask ourselves about seminal books that have moulded entire cultures. To what degree and in what respects have various forms of religion welcomed democracy or at least not resisted it? And if some forms of religion have been hostile, at what particular points and for what reasons have they demonstrated that hostility? I shall examine four books, all of

which I think you will agree have been seminal in human history and all four of which have exercised great influence over very large numbers of human beings.

The Homeric epics were the dominant books for Ancient Hellenic education. An oral tradition created by and for a heroic and aristocratic society, certainly neither the "Iliad" nor the "Odyssey" at any point encouraged democracy. Quite the contrary. Thus, the Homeric epics serve as good examples of culturally dominant book which, although themselves anti-democratic, ultimately helped mould the specifically Hellenic city-state form of democracy which flourished in the ancient world. They did so by reflecting the centrality, next to fighting, of rhetoric in the life of the hero and hence embedding the practice of dialogue and debate in ancient Hellenic society. They did so by emphasising the hero and his achievements and simultaneously downgrading the significance of obedience to a single strong leader. They did so, finally, by envisaging gods who behave no better and no worse than human beings, who act primarily as partners or opponents of heroes, not as judges or lawgivers over them. Of course, this was not the whole of ancient Greek religion: there were matters where the gods set down rules, but they did so as relatively far more powerful, and self-interested, parties. There was a concept of divine power and of divine justice, but not, as yet, of divine transcendence.

No modern democratic polity I know of has copied the institution of ostracism, that is of exiling a citizen for ten years, without permanent loss of civic rights, in the first place because no modern democratic polity operates without some concept of human rights and in the second place no modern democratic polity is primarily afraid of an individual rather than a political movement usurping power and overturning a democratic constitution. Hellenic city-state democracy was never secure and was never complete but it was not for that reason less seminal and creative.

Democracy developed in Hellenic city-states as a consequence of the emergence of a new context for political action, but always within the cultural substratum created and ever-renewed by the Homeric epic, which was the strongest force moulding Hellenic values from the eighth century BCE to the third century CE, that is for over 1,000 years. The new context was created by two long-term

developments. The first was the colonisation movement from the eighth century on and the ease of personal movement along the sea routes of the Mediterranean, which allowed people from other social groups than the aristocracy to see themselves as acting on the pattern of the individual hero. The second was the emergence first of the city-state as the most widespread feature of political organisation and, second, of methods of warfare which gave an advantage to the mass of a citizen army rather than to individual combatants.

We need not examine the consequences in detail, except to point out that ancient Hellenic democracies flourished in the ancient world along sea trade routes, that they were remarkably egalitarian in political and legal but much less so in economic terms, and that in all such democracies the great mass of law was created by the citizens themselves in the assembly. Even in oligarchic states, law was created by institutions to which citizen access was indeed restricted, but where the lawmakers were again citizens of broadly equal status.

The Hellenic city-state therefore created a legal tradition which, while ignorant of human as opposed to citizens' rights and comparatively weak in respect of the influence either of divine command, or of prescriptive tradition or again of the authority of individual judges, was by contrast very responsive to the changing needs and views of the citizen body. One of the most significant of the many Hellenic legacies to Rome was the adoption of this view of the origin of law by a non-Hellenic city-state and its successful adaptation to the very different and ever-changing circumstances of a city-empire, in which the influence of judges, of legal scholars and of precedent was paramount, but in which the state and those who controlled that state, whether an oligarchic Senate legislating for or with a popular assembly or a dominant princeps as ruler, or an absolute monarch, exercised legal authority. At all three stages law was based on human decision or tradition, not divine command.

The Homeric epics are not of course the only books that have moulded human hearts, souls and minds. Let me now briefly discuss the Hebrew Scriptures, the New Testament and the Koran. Despite the fact they are all three fundamental documents of monotheism, these three differ amongst themselves almost as much as they differ from the Homeric epic. And we must also not forget that

the influence of the Homeric epic did not end when a combination of the Jewish scriptures and the New Testament successfully challenged it for the leading role in moulding human personhood in the course of the third and fourth centuries of our common era. Although this was by no means a foregone conclusion, by the end of the fourth century the leading Greek-speaking Christian theologians of their age had incorporated Hellenic literature into their recommendations for a Christian education. Meanwhile admiration for the imperial traditions of the Roman Empire, a lighthouse of relative stability in a turbulent world, gave a huge advantage to Roman law in moulding the administrative and commercial life of many peoples both within but also outside the Empire.

The Hebrew Scriptures appear to me to have four dominant themes, that of the salvation of a people chosen by God, over the long course of its history, that of prophetic insight into and denunciation of social injustice and inequity, compared with the righteousness of God, that of a prayerful approach towards and ecstatic praise of a single God, and that of divine law as part of the covenant of salvation between God and his chosen people, whose relationship oscillated between the intensity of a living faith and stormy rejection.

The religious and ethical intensity of Judaism was attractive to many but unacceptable to a majority in the Greco-Roman world. Judaism was for long a proselytising but never a majority religion. By contrast the Christian faith ultimately did become the majority religion in the Roman Empire during the fourth century of our era, not however through military victory but after and, up to a point, even because of a long period of almost three hundred years of intermittent persecution. It was almost four hundred years after Jesus' mission on earth that the Christian Church was established as the official religion of the Empire and began in its turn to legally disadvantage and, later, persecute its opponents. Prominent among these was Judaism even though the Christian Church always retained and honoured the Hebrew Scriptures. In consequence, there is throughout later Christian history, a double tension, one deriving from the degree of emphasis placed by different Christian groups on the Hebrew scriptures compared to the New Testament; the other deriving from the degree of Christian sympathy at any one time with the experience of a proscribed Church in the first four

centuries as compared with its later experience of a triumphalist but often problematic relationship with the state as an established Church.

The impact of the Christian faith on politics and social life has been made even more unpredictable by the consciously radical witness of Jesus himself. Jesus drew very clearly on the prophetic, rather than the legal elements in Judaism. He specifically refused to become a law-giver, even though many Christians of later centuries, clearly would have preferred him to have been precisely that. His opposition to rigid observance of the Sabbath stems from the view that religious regulations should be honoured only to the extent they did not hinder his redemptive work, namely to bring on the coming of the Kingdom of God. This Kingdom, unlike worldly kingdoms, cannot be fought for, but can be attained by first becoming a person and then acting towards others out of existential commitment to God and to fellow human beings, a commitment which is effectively identical, since God is to be seen in one's neighbour and can be served by solidarity with one's neighbour, whether close or distant.

So, Jesus had little to say about law, and almost nothing about politics. His teaching as to existential commitment however is as clear as it is radical. Before Jesus, Rabbi Hillel had famously called on Jewish believers not to do to others what they would not wish others to do to them. Jesus' version of the Golden Rule, preserved alike in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, takes instead not a negative but a positive form, namely that one should act towards others as one would wish them to act towards oneself. This is an even more radical principle of action, because it makes every other person a centre of concern equivalent to oneself.

The parable of the Good Samaritan serves as confirmation. First, the Good Samaritan did precisely what Jesus' interpretation of the Golden Rule demands. Second, the ethical significance of his action was no different to Jesus, whether he was Jew or Samaritan, the Samaritan representing the archetypal "other" for any Jew of his time who followed the law. In this way, the Covenant was gradually opened from being one between a particular people and its God, to becoming one between all people and their God. This on the basis of an existential

commitment which teaches all other human beings should be treated with the same concern every human being has for himself or herself.

Already at the end of Matthew's Gospel, written not later than the second half of the first century, we meet Jesus' parting command to his disciples to baptise the whole world, "In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit". Early Christians envisaged the Holy Spirit as acting within the world to guide human beings into ultimate truth and thus as an ongoing force for continuous renewal and, where necessary, redirection of their existential commitment. Given the tendencies within Judaism which Jesus adopted and those which he opposed, or ignored, it was to be expected that even though he never opened a specifically political discussion, his teaching, if it were to prevail, would one day have substantive political consequences.

This has in fact occurred in a dramatic manner at least twice in Christian history. The first was in the fourth century, and one of our best witnesses to it is the last pagan Emperor, Julian (361-363). There was a famine in Ancyra, then capital of Galatia in Asia Minor. Julian sent supplies of gain to his pagan high priest, expostulating that in a famine the Jews take care of their own, while "the Nazarenes" (his word for Christians) take care not only of their own but "of our people also". Here we have a clear tribute to an enemy who was breaking down accepted boundaries and practicing what we today would call "universal provision", on the basis of a new and powerful form of existential commitment.

Of course, the moment passed, the Roman Empire was gradually converted but continued to behave in most respects as all absolutist states behave, save for a markedly greater concern for the needs of the elderly, the poor and the sick, a concern expressed chiefly through the Church. Significantly however, the law of the imperial city-state remained Roman law, imperial and secular rather than divine in origin. This balance between religiously based existential commitment and a legal system based on a human lawgiver, meant there was likely to come a day, as indeed occurred, over a millennium later, when a renewed or rediscovered sense of the equality of human beings would lead to a political acceptance of the principle that equivalent concern for "the other" in the form of a fellow

citizen, entailed equivalence of liberties and rights but also equality in the exercise of choice for political leadership. Ultimately indeed this might lead to a situation where there might be no preference for a Jew over a Samaritan or a Christian over a Muslim. And this is the road on which one after another Christian society embarked, beginning in the seventeenth century, partially under Christian influence, partly under the influence of ancient Hellenic precedent and example.

In the meantime, however the last of the great books I shall briefly consider – and which I must confess I know least well of the four – had made its power widely felt. None of the great religions has expanded, at its very beginning, with such dramatic success as Islam. The Koran represents the very words of Allah, whose transcendence is matched by his closeness, as close to a man as his jugular vein. Early Christians had opened the Covenant from one to all peoples. Simultaneously they assigned towards Judaic law a lower ranking than to existential commitment towards a God who had adopted human nature and set a personal example of concern for the condition of all human beings as central to the building of God's Kingdom. The Muslims of the first centuries also effectively opened the Covenant between God and men to one that included all peoples but they did so, in contrast to Christians, by emphasising and reinterpreting the Judaic precedent of divine law, which, as it represented the will of a truly merciful God, demanded, and continuously demands, the response of submission to God's will from every human being. Thus, law in Muslim societies came to be primarily based on human interpretation of divine law, drawn from the Koran and the traditions of the Prophet and his companions. Secular law existed but was clearly secondary.

This creates an immediate tension, not to say conflict, with secular lawmaking based on the liberty of citizens to choose their representatives. Many Muslims continue to refuse to accept the primacy of law stemming from the popular will as against law stemming from divine ordinance. In order to reduce the extent of that conflict, those Muslims who believe that divine law must take precedence need, at the very least, to attempt to restrict the range of the disagreement. To take one example, it was for too long unproblematic for Muslims to simultaneously quote the Koran as proclaiming there can be no compulsion in matters of

religion and to uphold the provision of Islamic law by which any Muslim who converts to another religion is legally liable to face the death penalty. Even in some secular countries with a Muslim majority which forbade this, over the last generation a Muslim converted to another faith was likely to be murdered. This particular contradiction between the Koran and Islamic legal tradition has always been problematic to any person with moral sensitivity: today it does double damage to Muslims by simultaneously infringing one of the most fundamental human liberties and by indicating it is not submission to the word of God so much as to a system of theoretically divine law that is primary for those who maintain this view.

This particular instance indicates the contradiction between divine and human lawmaking can be reduced but it certainly cannot be entirely abolished. The tension will remain. The complex challenge facing Muslim societies in this respect is evident, and made more so by the almost weekly announcements over the last few years, of killings of peaceful Christians in Iraq and Egypt, killings which contradict the Koran and Islamic law alike, but yet continue.

The second challenge is in principle shared with every country in the world, so the tension here is not between Muslim and secular jurisprudence. It is rather the consequence of militarisation of the state, something that can quite easily occur and has often occurred in non-Muslim as well as Muslim countries. No-one studying only early Christian communities for instance could easily imagine how militarised and warlike some later Christian societies were to become. The extraordinary successes of Islamic armies both in the first Islamic century and on many subsequent occasions however have bequeathed to many Muslims not just a sense that military triumph is almost a God-given right but that the armies through which such military triumph has been given share in the blessing, thus acquiring a prestige which because religious in origin, is not as easily reversible as military prestige based merely on secular success. Apart from traditional Muslim dynasties, whose prestige is also often semi-religious, armies are among the most effective source of support for secularisation precisely because, paradoxically but also logically, their prestige derives in part at least from

memories of past or recent triumphs by Muslim armies. Mustafa Kemal or Ataturk, and the tradition he created, serve as a powerful example.

How does this danger manifest itself? Not in the insistence on the divine origin of law. That is, as we have seen, represents a major challenge in itself, but in order to discuss this second challenge, we must assume the first challenge has been successfully surpassed, as has indeed occurred in many Muslim countries. Even when the primacy of secular law and secular decision-making has been accepted and majority rule constitutionally entrenched, there remains the issue of the independence of the judiciary. This is, as already stated, not just a problem for Muslim countries – not a few member states of the EU face similar problems. With this difference, that the aura of authority provided by the tradition of Islamic superiority on the field of battle can provide either a consciously Islamist government or a militarily-controlled government that additional prestige necessary to permit the purging and control of the judiciary, without effective opposition. In this way separation of powers, which experience has shown is absolutely fundamental to the operation of modern representative democracy, as it is also to the preservation of human liberties and rights, can be abolished. Development in the Turkish and Iranian bodies politic, to take but two examples, indicates in different ways how long and painful is the road towards a balanced respect for secular law, in contrast to the religious awe that can attach either to the adherents of a law based on religious tradition or to the military as the sword of Islam.

A third challenge concerns consociational states, of which again there are examples outside, within and on the borders of the Muslim world. The dramatic success of Islamic armies in the early years of Islam was not due only to the military skills but also the statesmanship of the early Caliphs, as witnessed in particular by the relationship instituted between Muslim rulers and subjected religious communities associated with the name of Caliph Umar. In principle, such a successful beginning might have been expected to lead to an easier transition to a balanced constitution in a consociational state than has been achieved in practice in many non-Muslim countries. Thus far however this does not seem to have been the case, although one originally Christian majority but now Mus-

lim- majority consociational country, currently appears to be the most successful of all such states and in the most disastrous of all political environments, at that. I am of course referring to Lebanon.

It is only through experience we shall learn whether Islamic societies which wish to be called democratic, will face greater difficulties in facing these challenges than did Roman Catholic societies which were for many centuries wedded to traditional absolutist and monarchical regimes in Europe. We must hope they surmount them rather more rapidly, for the good of a world where the positive influence of religious faith may well be needed to face three specific challenges that democracies as a whole, if with notable exceptions, are currently failing to address.

The most obvious is the challenge of environmental degradation and climate change. Here it is the secular ideology of free market development that has created the challenge, through its very success in transforming the world over the last seventy years. The consequence is that past economic success may well turn into a future existential disaster. In responding to this challenge primary but not sole responsibility will fall on the scientific community, which can and must rapidly apply their research to real world situations at a cost the market can bear. Such has been the impact of the most successful model of economic development in combination with the elaboration of subtle communication strategies, to persuade voters in almost every country the present model of living is the only one worth pursuing, however, that it will require more than a scientifically based ecological ideology to make the timely alterations to human convictions and human behaviour that are necessary. All the world's substantial religions – Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish and Muslim – have traditionally taught restraint in a world subject, as they have believed, both to material and spiritual limits. Secularist opponents of the particular secular ideologies that have brought us to the point of multiple ecological crises may find they need the support of those committed to a religious faith to gain the existential energy for humankind to alter direction. It is of course easier, but rather more dangerous, to indulge in classroom ideological disputes while the fire burns.

In the last resort, ideological values are relative: only existential values can stand the test of time. Empirically, it of less significance whether human beings adopt ways of life that allow us to surmount the evident crisis facing us because they wish to live sustainably and in harmony with nature, or because they see it as the human vocation for human beings to act as steward of God's creation (Protestant but perhaps also Muslim language) or as priests of God's creation (perhaps Jewish, certainly Orthodox and Roman Catholic language). What is critical, because existential, is for us to give up the self-referential narrative, which despite the evident benefit to many, perhaps most, human beings as individuals is evidently leading all of us into existential danger.

The road ahead will not be strewn with roses. Already anti-dictatorial revolts, political, religious and ideological conflicts, and societal breakdowns have led to waves of migration, and this at a time when climate change has been nothing more than a contributory cause. It has already been demonstrated that established and prosperous societies will find it just as difficult to accept migrants as poor and struggling ones. The degree of success in facing what will be an ongoing crisis will depend alike on the existential stances of the migrants and of those called upon to greet them. Whether the Muslim world can give up its wounded triumphalism and the Western world its deathly self- referential satisfaction will, I believe, partially but significantly depend both on the answer to the challenges I have outlined above and in parallel on the Western world's ability to comprehend that the Christian element in its tradition, remains as relevant today as at any point in the past.

The same is true, finally, with respect to the internal solidarity of prosperous societies. The powerful engine of economic progress tends, on balance, to work for social differentiation, most obviously but not solely by way of two phenomena, namely economic inequality and family dissolution. Once again, the dangers involved require a response which do not separate but coordinate political and religious considerations.

My conclusion is therefore, first, that democracy in the most extended sense of that word, is indeed fundamental to the healthy development not just of the West in particular but to that of all our world in general; second, that representative

democracy as we know it, must include the separation of powers and human liberties and rights as a fundamental and core element; and, third, that contrary to what all too many believe, it is not true that religion is always a negative force, or that religious convictions are at best, irrelevant. Rather we should recognise that improved education, though always necessary, will never and, indeed, can never take the place of that fundamental choice, whether to live only for oneself, or equally for oneself and others. To put it another way, there is no certainty that today's professor or public relations expert will behave very differently from the priest and the Levite. As for the role of the Good Samaritan, we can all enjoy ourselves by speculating as to who, in our world, would be Jesus' preferred candidate!

Remember for the Future – The Mediterranean as a Memory Space: Conference Report

by Sarrah Kassem

N.B. All discussions were conducted under the Chatham House Rule. Therefore, in this report, interventions, other than those of speakers listed in the programme, are not attributed to individual delegates.

Introduction

It is in moments of shifting global and regional power relations, as well as political, economic and social crises, that it is essential to not just interrogate present dynamics, but also reflect on their past in order to conceptualize a future away from the current injustices, inequalities and tragedies. In this context, "Europe and the Mediterranean – Talking, Learning, Working and Living Together," a conference within the framework of the Maecenata Programme, took place in the geographical heart of the region – the Cretan capital of Heraklion. During the days of 24th – 27th of April 2017, academics and professionals, with varying roles in civil society, from over a dozen states on both sides of the Mediterranean, came together to discuss the historical trajectory and experiences of the region. In interrogating its colonial past, former and present unequal relations of power on both sides of its sea, and the resulting discourses and narratives that have been produced and continue to be reproduced, the participants have attempted to understand the present through its past in hopes of theorizing about the future of the Mediterranean.

The Opening Ceremony

The conference participants gathered in the Basilica of San Marco on the evening of the 24th of April to be welcomed by the words of *Dr. Rupert Graf Strachwitz* (Maecenata Foundation, Berlin, Germany). As the third of a series of conferences, which had previously taken place every two years (2013, 2015) in the Italian Villa Vigoni, the location of Crete was selected in accordance to this year's conference theme. Emphasizing the common cultural background of the region, the historical relevance of Crete was, thus, symbolic and essential

for the discussion on Mediterranean memory and future. In doing so, it is necessary to not just aim at conceptualizing short-term goals, but also long-term ones – based not on what separates the Mediterranean, but what unites it. Considering the current unfolding events, *Strachwitz* concluded that it is important to not leave this discussion exclusively to governments, but also incorporate the very actors in civil society who can contribute to the state of affairs on a day-to-day basis in various shapes and forms.

These words were built on by those of the Governor of Crete, *Stavros Arnaoutakis*, who began by elaborating on the symbolic importance of firstly the Basilica and then more generally that of Heraklion and Crete. He shed light on the larger role of the island in the past of the region, reaching from the times of the Byzantine to the Arab conquest and European civilization. The 1995 Summit of Barcelona was recounted as marking the beginning of the cooperation between the two sides of the Mediterranean, bringing together countries with different historical and cultural backgrounds in the name of four pillars – peace, security, welfare and stability. Within the framework for cooperation, *Arnaoutakis* constructed Crete, which lives from and through the sea, as having established a climate for peaceful coexistence between the different historical and cultural identities of the Mediterranean. As a result of the challenges following the Arab Spring, such as civil conflicts and refugee and humanitarian crises, he expressed the necessity to face these in order to transform the Mediterranean. The current conference was emphasized as developing new prospects for European-Mediterranean relations and contributing to the efforts of developing a new geography of peace, security, cooperation and stability. He concluded by hoping to see the Mediterranean Sea become once again the crossroad of economic and cultural dialogue.

Dimitrios P. Droutsas, the former Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs, further elaborated on the need for more cooperation on both sides of the Mediterranean in hopes of tackling current challenges. After emphasizing the role of Greece in supporting this conference in ideational and material terms, he reflected on the increased centrality of the Mediterranean considering the unfolding crises in the region. These have embodied various shapes, may these be political, economic

and social through, for instance, the refugee crisis and illegal migration to Europe, or being of an ecological kind, seeing that the Mediterranean faces enormous threats resulting from climate change. *Droutsas* stressed that these current problems are critical, since they are at the very doorstops and shores of the Mediterranean. Finding itself at a crossroad, the Mediterranean could now reconstruct itself positively, or continue to be used in reference to the negatively associated Mediterranean route. While he stated that mistakes were made and opportunities lost in light of the refugee crisis and that a Mediterranean Union would be more of a dream in the present moment, he emphasized that there is now an obligation to tell the truth, develop solidarity and demonstrate support to the people of the Mediterranean.

The welcoming session came to a close with the words of the Deputy Mayor for Culture of Heraklion, *Aristea Plevri*. Echoing previous speeches, *Plevri*, returned to the essentiality of the Mediterranean by large and Crete more specifically as a receptor of conflicting cultures and nations in historical moments of war and trade. As such, she highlighted that the geographical location of Crete and its historical role allowed for the transfer of populations, goods and ideas. In the discussion of the Mediterranean's contemporary challenges, Crete was presented as the most fitting location for this conference. According to her, it is these very challenges that keep other nations and actors interested not just in the Cretan island, but also the region and the Mediterranean Sea. As this welcoming session concluded, the participants had a chance to discuss these initial thoughts during social conversations over dinner. It was in the coming two days that the deeper meanings of these thoughts would be more critically reflected on, engaged with and interrogated in hopes of constructing a future that is not characterized by the current tragedies unfolding across the region and its sea.

The panels and sessions took place over the course of two days, Tuesday the 25th and Wednesday the 26th of April. Although the panels within each day and across the two days had different foci and stressed different aspects of the Mediterranean, they also intersected. This not only became clear in the presentations themselves, but even more so in the subsequent discussions that raised critical points in terms of not just what was included in the sessions, but what was left out and silenced. The sessions on Tuesday opened the conference and set the

scene for what would follow. As such, after the opening session that reflected on the present moment, the panels on Tuesday were more of a critical engagement with the historical past of the region in colonial, social, political and, to an extent, economic terms. They underlined the important role of history and the discourses that have come to inform its narration and expression in contemporary times, which cannot be analyzed in isolation from the very power relations that have come to produce these.

Fiddling while Rome Burns?

The conference day was opened with the welcoming words of *Henrietta Goelet* (John Goelet Foundation, USA) who continued the projection of the historical trajectory of the role of the Mediterranean, as a region that has linked the most central civilizations through its sea. Building on the welcoming ceremony of the previous day, *Goelet* underlined once more how the Mediterranean Sea was both a blessing and a battlefield, a cradle and a grave. Its historical significance was embodied in its ability to bond and unite its people, yet it has also witnessed a fair share of tragedies. Taken these seemingly endless tragedies, the refugee crisis being among the most central today, she posed the question, as to whether we should be dealing with these issues more directly. At that moment, she pointed out the title of the session, which appeared to be a reference to the Roman Emperor Nero known to have played music, while the capital was burning. By citing the experiences of post World War Two Germany, *Goelet* stated that what has historically helped countries and people to move forward, was to consider what the next steps could be, how the country could once more be built and reintegrated into our globe. In light of this, she hoped this conference could provide such an opportunity.

Prof. Dr. Udo Steinbach (Governance Center Middle East | North Africa / Humboldt-Viadrina Governance Platform, Germany) equally reflected on the symbolic importance of the session's title in the current context of refugees and migrants crossing over the Mediterranean Sea. He posed the question, as to whether we would be fiddling by withdrawing from the rest of the world for the next 48 hours in order to discuss the Mediterranean. *Steinbach* indicated that it

is because of the crisis not just south of the Mediterranean Sea, but also in Europe today, that we have gathered in these times to challenge the current political economic order in the space of the Mediterranean. As the first session of the conference, he emphasized the general theme of the role of memory and narratives in impacting the past and building an alternative future. It is essential to remember for the future by reflecting on historical conquests, rules and developments in order to find a way through which the north-south setting can be reinvented. *Steinbach* argued that this requires a fundamental change of perception that moves away from the binary construction of the 'Self' and the 'Other' (Us vs. Them), which was at the heart of colonial rule. The conceptualization of the future must then, in contrast, be more inclusive and be built on equal access to political, economic and environmental resources regardless of class and power positions. Although the Arab uprisings took place through the power of the people and led to a massive wave of artistic expression, they did not lead to democratic rule. Europe, nonetheless, continues to instrumentalize these regimes to advance its own political-economic interests in the region; a region that in the eyes of Europe has become increasingly characterized by jihadism – a barbaric ideology that does not distinguish between Muslim and non-Muslim. With these tragedies in mind and the political-economic setting in which countries, such as Syria, continue to fall apart, *Steinbach* concluded that powers today appear to be indeed fiddling in broad daylight in the larger pursuit of own individualistic interests.

In hopes of doing more than just fiddling with the present state of the Mediterranean, this first session sought to introduce the historical and contemporary state of the Mediterranean. Taken the location and theme of the conference, *Dr. Polyxeni Adam-Veleni* (Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki, Greece) continued the session by providing a historical trajectory of Greek colonization. *Adam-Veleni* identified three developments as being the most central: the Greek alphabet as a medium of communication, metal coinage as a medium of exchange and knowledge of navigation that allowed for the expansion of the city states through the acquisition of new lands and resources. The importance of land, space and geographical location was underlined in the selection of areas for civilization (high or low land), leading also to varying kinds and sizes of

city-states protected through strong fortifications. While developments may not have always happened in a peaceful manner, attempts of diplomatic or spiritual solutions were cited. She highlighted that the founding of a city as a colony was accompanied by the construction of certain institutions that would support and allow for the cultivation of civilization and urban centers, including administrative centers, theaters and houses. As the Mediterranean Sea is what has historically brought the region together, the presentation by *Adam-Veleni* opened the conference for the reflection on previous instances of coexistence and cohabitation that can be essential for thinking about the contemporary region and the future.

Rather than delving into the historical past of a specific civilization in the Mediterranean, *Dr. Nora Lafi* (Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO) Berlin, Germany) reflected on contemporary regional developments and their historical roots in order to emphasize the importance of being a historian with a civic conscience in times of repeated and continued violence, aggression and oppression. This entails playing a role in the present by interpreting the past and reconsidering its reoccurrences today. This is especially important at a time in which the region is falling into chaos. Today, we are witnessing slave and child trafficking in Libya, which is a country that has lost its entire infrastructure, and, the continued forced displacement of Palestinians that now spend endless nights in refugee camps, which have, in their own way, become urban neighborhoods. *Lafi* urged for the reconsideration of ideas and notions that have been artificially constructed and imposed, most crucially during European colonial rule, and consequences of which can still be felt socially, economically and politically today. Such notions include violence, the nation state and minorities. She first discussed violence as not an inherent characteristic of the region, and how much of the violence today was a product of European colonialism. It was the West that had, nonetheless, created modern jihadism in 1977 Afghanistan, NATO that had bombed Libya and it is through direct financing or proxy wars in Syria and Libya that jihadist groups can continue to exist. In a similar manner, it was through the European creation of the nation state and the concept of minority that were imposed on the Mediterranean, that a region with a long tradition of

coexisting despite diversity was broken up and dismantled. Thus, with her inspiring presentation, *Lafi* made a call for the necessity of including a critical interrogation of history, not just in remembering the past, but also similarly for understanding the current power relations that have taken shape globally and particularly in the Mediterranean.

Discussion

The discussion of this panel, chaired by *Dr. Rupert Graf Strachwitz*, revolved around the power relations between colonizer and colonized and how these affected each other in the past and until the present day. The participants discussed the paradoxical space of the Mediterranean. A central theme in the discussion was the larger role of Western powers in the Mediterranean today. What once appeared as a more peaceful region, was now one heavily influenced by European powers and the United State of America (USA). In our contemporary world and in attempts of moving it forward, it seems that the European Union (EU) does not have a common strategy or common approach towards the Mediterranean region. This has led to unfortunate events such as the bombing of Libya. At the same time, we are seeing a renationalization taking place within the EU itself, as member states look to their own interests and do not care so much for wider European ones. It was stated that as long as Europe does not come together, we would continue to see events such as the bombing of Libya and a continued move away from a more peaceful form of coexistence in the Mediterranean.

Within the discussion of historical and colonial power dynamics, the participants exchanged views on one concept in particular that is at the core of how the world is organized until this day, namely the European nation state and its imposition on to the region. It was argued that the role of colonialism in the region could not be denied, but that at the same time nationalism was not exclusively imposed on the countries south to the Mediterranean from the outside. From this perspective, there were forces within these societies pushing for the creation of nation states for both economic and political reasons. However, it was responded that one could not dismiss the historical fact that this is a region

which has been governed by empires for millennia from the Roman to the Ottoman and that with the colonial conquest came the imposition of the European nation state, which in turn has had disastrous effects on the region. This has taken the shape of the dismantlement of political and economic systems, such as the free trade that had been taking place for centuries across the empire. In terms of the dominant economic capitalist system of today, it is not just the role of political states that must be interrogated, but also that of corporations, which in many instances have become more powerful than states themselves.

The session opened the discussion for how we have conceptualized the Mediterranean in the past, but also what implications and repercussions these conceptualizations have had on the contemporary moment. One cannot theorize about the future without, not just consulting history, but also critically interrogating this very history in order to deconstruct the consequences it has carried into the present day.

Culture of Memories

As the previous session focused on the importance of history in specific for understanding the region, this session, chaired by *Angie Cotte* (Roberto Cimetta Fund, France), was mainly about the importance of how such a history, and, therefore, memories and different kinds of narratives, were and continue to be constructed. While the approach of the first panelist, *Dimitris Stefanakis* (Author, Greece), was that of literature, the second panelist, *Prof. Dr. Yamina Bettahar* (Université de Lorraine & MSH Lorraine, France), centralized history's role in memory and narrative construction.

Stefanakis linked his session to the previous one by beginning with the statement that identity, such as the Greek, would not be a matter of history per se, but a question of language and literature, as that of Plato. From his perspective, the Mediterranean was nothing but a figment of imagination. He distinguished between two ways of story telling: one as an historian and the other as a novelist. His focus was on that of the latter. As a novelist, *Stefanakis* questioned whether memory was a tool of story telling or vice versa, as it ensured a certain element of immortality that was not always a matter of accuracy. He emphasized that

narration can be just as much from personal, as well as collective experience and memory, citing the example of Mediterranean cosmopolitanism. To *Stefanakis*, memory, while closely related to reality, had a captivating experience and relation to time. He concluded that literature is the art of remembering in a way that allows memory to surpass the end of time. History, literature and language with all their dimensions, shape these memories and allow for a recording of moments. Memory, especially through poetry and literature, was then emphasized as essential for the reconstruction of past moments, as well as, for the present and future.

As *Stefanakis* ended his presentation, *Cotte* commented that there were indeed many untold stories, which were part of history that must be considered. Unlike *Stefanakis*, who understood memory as being expressed through literature isolated from wider spatial and temporal processes, *Bettahar*'s approach contextualized memory within historical relations. The Mediterranean as seen by *Bettahar*, was a space of mutual interdependence of both sides of the sea and of interaction marked by a circulation of people, knowledge, ideas, arts and sciences. She identified two specific examples that characterize the Mediterranean's contemporary dynamics and relations and are closely linked to the memory of the Mediterranean. The first of these is the migration phenomenon; the second evolves around questions of Islam, democracy and the historical relations between Arabic and European philosophers. The former example was highlighted in order to shed light on the dynamics of past and present massive migration of asylum seekers and refugees and the populist responses and racist discourses that accompany it. *Bettahar* stated that the current crisis was one that was political, moral and demographic. The latter example examined the deeper historical and colonial prejudices that saw Islam and democracy as paradoxical and incompatible. Similar to *Dr. Nora Lafi*, *Bettahar* emphasized that it is absolutely necessary to incorporate and critically engage with history when approaching the Mediterranean today, especially when it comes to notions of violence and the conception of democracy and Islam as incompatible. These were all not inherent to the region, but only a reflection of colonial power relations, processes and ideas that have come to inform and dominate the narrative and discourse and must be questioned. She thereby understood memory as being

determined by the historical unfolding and as an expression of power dynamics that in turn construct certain narratives. She concluded by stating that it is time to find new solutions to bridge the sides of the Mediterranean in hopes of sharing knowledge and the common heritage that would incorporate the entirety of Mediterranean cultures.

Discussion

The two differing approaches, of seeing literature as a medium for memory and identity isolated from history, and, a more historical engagement with these, became increasingly evident in the discussion. The audience criticized the former and pointed out that history must be approached as a continuum, rather than being static and that history affects the production and reproduction of certain narratives, and therefore, memory. *Stefanakis* defended his position that the past cannot be recovered as a whole and that instead it must be reinvented, and that in this process some of it is destined to be lost. Within his understanding this can still be used to create the future. The majority of participants, while acknowledging the importance and the role of literature, urged for the incorporation of the study of history in order to process past memories of the Mediterranean, but also untangle current political-economic and social dynamics.

The audience discussed the links of the two ideas mentioned by *Bettahar*: migration and populism, as well as the constructed European idea of the incompatibility of Islam and democracy. One participant argued that such questions of Islam and democracy often push one into a defensive mode to always have to disprove common conceptions about them not being compatible. Instead, it is vital to study how such a question is, in fact, rooted in colonialism itself. With this in mind, it is necessary to investigate who produces and controls certain discourses. Although populism and the rise of nationalism are not particular to the 21st century and similar patterns had existed as in the time of World War II, it is necessary to examine the very falsification of history that takes place today through phenomena such as fake news. This examination must also include the spreading of nationalist and populist ideas, which construct a certain discourse that dramatizes specific aspects and notions and dismisses others. It is not just the discursive production and reproduction that is important to interrogate, but

similarly the very political-economic and social conditions that are directly linked and dialectically related to the rise of nationalism and populism today. What this essentially means is to study how the political and economic contexts are mutually enforcing and evolving.

Reflecting on memory and past developments that are directly a result of colonial processes and relations, the participants urged for a change of perspective that does away with barriers and divisions of North and South and the categories often linked to the works of Edward Said's Orientalism – Us vs. Them – Self and Other. In attempting to move forward, colonial crimes must be recognized for what they were and what they mean in today's world. Suggestions to do so included: the reconstruction of Mediterranean cosmopolitanism to unify the region and allow for cohabitation, as well as a move away from continuously applying Eurocentric approaches and studying Western thinkers by encouraging educating the youth of today about the common heritage of both sides of the Mediterranean (such as Ibn Khaldun[4]).

If the first session of the day was to emphasize why it is important to look at history and what this means for today's world, this session presented the different ways through which a story can be told and the importance of narratives. In thinking about the future of the Mediterranean, it is crucial then to consider the different discourses within its history; why some have been more pronounced than others, and why some have been silenced altogether. These discourses become an expression of the larger political-economic and social setting and the power relations within these, emphasizing certain notions in the interests of some powers and dismissing others. History, along with its discursive expressions, must be part of any discussion on present day dynamics.

Commercial Roots

Following the panels that focused on the history of the Mediterranean, its links to today and ways of narrating these, the session on commercial roots shed light

[4] Ibn Khaldun (27 May 1332 – 17 March 1406) was a North African Arab historiographer and historian. He is claimed as a forerunner of the modern disciplines of sociology and demography.

on a historical period in which economic and trade interests allowed for opportunities for cooperation. 'Commercial Roots' was chaired by *John Kelly* (Mira Kelly; International Fundraising Consultancy, United Kingdom) and solely based on the presentation by *Dr. Vera Costantini* ("Ca' Foscari" University of Venice, Italy) whose interest lay on the historical relations of commercial roots and mutual exchange with a central focus on the Venetians and the Ottomans.

Her presentation highlighted the importance of the linkage between geographic location and economic interests and how this can lead to establishing relations of trade. Her starting point was the crucial role of Venice for the eastward expansion of European commercial trade routes and activities that developed strong economic bonds with for example the Byzantine, Syrians, Turkic, Egyptians and later the Ottoman Empire. The Venetian case study established that international maritime activity in the south-eastern Mediterranean and Black Sea, goes back to the Middle Ages with the attempts to integrate capital formation and mutual exchange into an economic model. This model was based on firstly the availability of resources and secondly the redistribution of these, with wood being absolutely central for the Venetians. With commercial roots in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, the Caspian region became an intense area of trading and investment that led to the rest of the Asian continent. *Costantini* emphasized that the relations of the northern bank of the Mediterranean and the southern were long and historical with the Ottomans. Accordingly, both sides influenced each other's civilizations, as European civilization was willing to acquire knowledge, resources, as well as technology, from the east and vice versa. With her presentation, *Costantini* demonstrated that the two main Mediterranean institutional entities, and, in this case commercial activities were between the Ottomans and the Venetians. Their commercial and economic relations were not based on the principle of identity per se, but that of reciprocity in trade. As the conference theme is to recover memories of the Mediterranean in order to theorize about its future, *Costantini* concluded that the history of the Republic of Venice showed that clashes of identity can be overcome in order to establish mutually beneficial exchanges and relations. While her presentation focused more on historical economic relations, rather than ones of today, it gave

glimpses of hope in which a future across the Mediterranean can be envisioned far from its current inequalities, wars and crises.

Discussion

The discussion resulting from the historical overview of mainly Venetian and Ottoman trade relations proved to be equally an historical engagement with the trade relations of the Mediterranean region. Participants asked questions in regard to the nature of the inclusive and exclusive relations and commands of the Venetians among themselves, as well as, the differences between the Venetians and other near by merchants, such as those from Genoa. This in turn led to a reflection on the unequal power relations between merchants, which could be witnessed in terms of, for example, access to ports, as Italian merchants had more access to Ottoman ports than vice versa. *Costantini* responded that when comparing merchants, such as those of Genoa and Venice, it is important to remember the role of political and economic shifts of power. Ultimately, it was Genoa that was heavily concentrated on one trade partner, namely the Byzantine Empire, and when the latter disappeared, so did the former. This was fundamentally different to the Venetians who did not just focus on one specific territory for their commercial relations. Instead, the growing expansion of the Venetians allowed for the continuous establishment of new trade relations. She further argued that local sources and documents prove that Venetian trade during the Ottoman Empire was relatively inclusive, which allowed for it to flourish and strengthen ties to the Ottoman Empire. In these trade relations, the notion of iltizam was mentioned as being central. Iltizam was a form of contract between the Sultan and another person, in which the multazim, the contractor, agrees to pay an annual sum to the provincial government in exchange for possibility to deal with local resources (see for instance the salt works, in which Venetians agreed to pay a certain amount to the Sultan to be able to transfer the salt).

Taken that the notions of interaction, identity and tolerance were of centrality to the conference, one delegate concluded the discussion by asking where the limits of tolerance between Ottomans and Venetians were. Once again, *Costantini* stressed that these economic trade relations were not about the tolerance of

moral standards and that these would be more modern notions of the 21st century. This session then demonstrated how cooperation through strong economic ties could be a way in which the Mediterranean could move forward, rather than remain stuck in discussions evolving exclusively around the constructions of identities. In relation to previous sessions, one can add that it is important to not just consider the ideational and discursive aspects when it comes to history, but also the economic ones that drive interests and power relations. Though the presentation's focus was on the past, and class relations and capital in the contemporary world were not discussed, it showed how one cannot lose sight of the historical roots of economies today and the exploitative and unequal power relations that have resulted from the capitalist system.

Everyday Life

After long and critical discussions about the historical trajectory of the region and the mutually evolving relations that exist across the sea and within the same states, this final session of the day engaged with expressions of the different, yet similar, identities of the Mediterranean today. Chaired by *Paul Lassus* (Lawyer, Paris Bar, France), this panel began with the screening of a documentary by *Prof. Dr. Sahar Hamouda* (Alexandria and Mediterranean Research Center, Bibliotheca Alexandrina / Alexandria University, Egypt). With her documentary, she sought to shed light on the cosmopolitan social fabric of Alexandria and its relations to its past, expressed and embodied in gastronomy and the different cuisines of the Mediterranean. *Hamouda* interviewed various Mediterranean communities living in Alexandria to portray the diversity of these communities and the historical interlinkages that existed between them when it came to their cuisines. These communities included ones of Greek, Turkish, Shami (Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian background), Italian, Armenian and Egyptian origin, while the intersecting culinary dishes that were displayed and cooked included Moussaka, Dolma, Tabbouleh, Jew's Mallow and Shawarma. Although these dishes may be prepared differently across communities and their origins are often unknown, they nonetheless are at their core one and the same. This documentary demonstrated the historical influences and developments that have affected the constellation of communities and how gastronomy in turn is

essential in cultural and social interactions and can become their expression in everyday life interactions.

In contrast to *Hamouda* who was interested in the manifestations of Mediterranean identity in the form of gastronomy in Alexandria, *Prof. Dr. Caroline Y. Robertson-von-Trotha* (ZAK | Centre for Cultural and General Studies, KIT – The Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, Germany / German Network of the Anna Lindh Foundation, Germany) was interested in the reflection of Mediterranean identity in the form of opinion polls. She briefly introduced the Anna Lindh Foundation as a network of civil society organizations across the EU, Maghreb and near East Region with the purpose of building a dialogue characterized by a four "D" strategy: democracy, diversity, dialogue and development. *Robertson-von-Trotha*'s presentation had a special focus on identities and described these as not being static, but collective, inclusive, exclusive, individual and multiple depending on the context. The focus of the presentation was an opinion poll that was to measure intercultural trends and social change in the Euro-Mediterranean region.[5] The central component of the poll that was emphasized was the perceptions of key values on both sides of the Mediterranean in fifteen countries such as obedience, independence or family solidarity, whilst also emphasizing the role of women in different aspects of life, cultural diversity and tolerance. This quantitative data was presented as providing specific statistics on differences among the chosen states and between the European states north to the Mediterranean Sea and the Middle East and North African countries south to it. Through this presentation, the Anna Lindh Foundation was introduced as seeking, with the help of such polls, to develop a long-term approach for strengthening and increasing partnerships across both sides of the Mediterranean. In comparison to previous sessions that examined historical ideational and material interests, this panel exemplified how such discussions can be expressed in the present-day world and be manifested differently.

[5] The Anna Lindh Report 2017 is expected to be published in Autumn 2017. See: http://www.annalindhfoundation.org/new-survey-reveals-euro-med-region-not-victim-clash-civilisations

Discussion

The two presentations led to a heated discussion on matters of identity and deconstructing these within the past and current contexts of the Mediterranean. The participants expressed a positive reaction towards *Hamouda*'s documentary and were curious in regard to the terminology of Shawam and how this stands to the constructed Israeli identity. To this she answered that Sham was the term used to refer to the region of Syria, Lebanon and Palestine during the Ottoman period and that actually, prior to the establishment of Israel, the term Israelites was used to refer to the Jewish communities. Whereas these Jewish communities were part of the social fabric of the region, it is the Israeli identity today that continues to culturally appropriate the Arab identity, reflected in culinary dishes and Palestinian dress. Another interesting issue that was raised was that of class, and, whether cosmopolitanism was reserved to the bourgeoisie. However, it was said that the work of Edward al-Kharat, who writes from an underprivileged Alexandrian perspective, describes how different parts of the cities were just as cosmopolitan. The audience enjoyed this documentary and encouraged *Hamouda* to film similar documentaries about the other port cities of the Mediterranean.

In the discussion, the participants appeared more critical towards the poll as presented by *Robertson-von-Trotha*. The participants questioned the very premise of this poll and asked in different ways, whether the opinion poll entailed Eurocentric biases, considering that the selected values that were polled seem to be those that especially northern European countries uphold. Similarly, it was asked who the participants of the polls were; what their age group was; what their class and gender composition was; why others were excluded; how these values were decided upon and defined when conducting the polls? The participants highlighted the manipulation that can result, if one does not critically engage with the premise of such polls and conduct, for instance, data control. This raised the question, whether the Anna Lindh Foundation considered these aspects when problematizing its own theorization. It seems that there would have been different results, if other countries had been chosen (especially the ones in Europe). To this it was responded that although this may be the case, this poll

was meant as an incentive to take necessary further steps and look deeper. *Robertson-von-Trotha* stated that there, is in fact, a scientific committee from both sides of the Mediterranean that expresses critique to then work together with the foundation in order to give insights on where to look more specifically. As such, this would be followed by a closer engagement with these individual countries. The choice of countries was also limited by what were termed as 'governance obstacles', bearing in mind that the foundation must have established contact with someone working in the Foreign Ministry, which seems problematic in countries like Syria and Libya. Such considerations, along with the premise of questions asked and definitions applied, can directly affect the turnout of such polls. Though quantitative data can be helpful in creating an overview, it cannot, however, be understood as inherently objective and true or analyzed removed from the political-economic setting and the temporal-spatial dimensions. Taken the importance of history in conceptualizing the present and the future in general, and here the Mediterranean specifically, it is necessary to always critically engage with the different forms of expressions of power, may these be ideational, material or discursive.

The first day of panels focused then on the interrelations of colonial history, narratives, expressions of these and manifestations of, for instance, identity. Its last session on Tuesday, 'Everyday Life,' could be understood as a bridging panel to the second day. Wednesday brought together previous sessions on memory and history to the extent that they contribute to discussions about the present day and what takes place in the Mediterranean – both on its lands and in/across its sea. Sessions on the role of religion in politics, the possibility of a common ground, the importance of the sea and the youth in the Mediterranean, allowed participants to engage and discuss, not just what this has meant for the memory of the region, but more importantly, what this can mean for our contemporary times and conceptualization of the future.

Politics & Religion

The second day started with presentations from contrasting faiths in order to contribute to the debate on politics and religion in past and present terms. This panel, chaired by *Dr. Rupert Graf Strachwitz*, began with the presentation of

Prof. Dr. Murat Çizakça (KTO Karatay University in Konya, Turkey / Luxembourg School of Finance, University of Luxembourg) who started by presenting the historical, cultural and religious exchanges between both parts of the Mediterranean – what he termed as Islamic and Western civilization. This was followed by the central question, as to why borrowings from east to west had proven to be beneficial to the latter, whereas they had proven to be destructive in the opposite direction. He suggested that while Europeans borrowed for instance the idea of waqf and Islamic madrasas (see the oldest college of Oxford) and applied these through a bottom-up approach, Muslims borrowed ideas of secularism and nationalism from the Europeans to the extent that they were imposed on them by colonial powers and modernists in a top down manner. Similar to presentations and discussions of the previous day, *Çizakça* emphasized the latter as having disastrous effects on the region until today. He gave the example of the waqf system, which he regarded as Islamic civil society institutions and their destructions through colonialism and the implementation of nationalism, which effectively removed any possibility for democracy. Looking at the Middle East and North Africa region today, *Çizakça* argued that colonialists have been replaced by native dictators in the postcolonial Islamic world that continue to exist despite the Arab uprisings. In order for this Islamic world to move forward and democratize, he called for the reinterpretation of Islam which would also allow for new institutions to be designed that embody its own values, but also include European notions such rule of law, separation of power and democracy in its own way. Citing religious and historical examples and verses from the Qur'an, he claimed that Islamic secularism had historically existed. As such, he concluded that Islam does not in fact impede these European notions and does not prescribe a specific system of governance. Through a study of the Islamic past, Islamic institutions can be redesigned to apply to the region in the 21st century. This would mean bringing about change from within, rather than having change imposed from the outside onto region.

In contrast to this presentation that focused more on the debate from the perspective of the Islamic world, *Costa Carras* (Europa Nostra, Greece), contributed to the debate on politics and religion from the standpoint of Christianity. He started off by saying that he agreed with *Çizakça* on most points, despite

coming from different backgrounds and having different starting points. He started with a personal anecdote from when he was in school and questioned his teacher's statement that Roman Catholic countries could not be secure democracies. This was introduced in order to demonstrate the complexity of the relation between religion and politics and how conceptions about the inability to marry religion and politics to disparage former (today predominantly Islam) may be displaced. He recalled the turbulent Christian past, which had been repeatedly regarded as being antithetical to democratic tradition and notions. Carras shed light on the historical development of the Calvinist tradition in the 17th and 18th century, as well as Roman Catholicism and their links to democracy and notions of inclusivity and exclusivity. This led him to pose the question, as to what extent have different forms of religion not opposed democracy and showed hostility? To engage with this, he surveyed four religious texts: the Homeric epics, the Hebrew Scriptures, the New Testament and the Qur'an. He stressed their respective historical influential role and the general impact of religion on the political and legal sphere. To analyze an expression of this in the world today and present current religious-political tensions and challenges, *Carras* focused, though not exclusively, on Muslim societies. These challenges and tensions include what he termed "divine and human lawmaking", the increased militarization of states, possibilities for consociational states and current environmental degradation and climate change. He concluded his talk by stating that democratic development is necessary for the well being of the entire world and must be based on the separation of powers, liberties and rights. This session, therefore demonstrated, how religious convictions and their reinterpretations could, in fact, be relevant in the political-economic and ecological dynamics of the world and Mediterranean today.

Discussion

The panel led to an animated discussion; one that engaged with the central arguments of the presentations, but was also critical of these. In terms of the arguments of the session, the question was asked, as to what extent secular legislation could be married with the full acceptance of the Qur'an. It was responded that the Qur'an could be reinterpreted in order to remain relevant in our current time and setting. Two examples were given: one of a young woman wearing

shorts on a bus in Turkey and one of a pregnant woman jogging in a public park, both of whom faced physical harassment in the name of supposedly forbidding wrong and commanding good. It was stated that the Qur'an did not mean this form of commanding good, and that this is why it must be reinterpreted to align with the current moment. This is equally important when it comes to looking at how religious law, such as sharia law, is in some cases not in line with the religious text itself (here Qur'an), but more a result of recent contradicting interpretations. The participants responded by raising the point that religion, and a certain interpretation of it, are instrumentalized to justify certain political rules today. Thus, it is necessary to apply ijtihad, religious reasoning, to reinterpret Islam according to the needs of the present moment.

Within the current moment, the Western world was also engaged with, as it currently faces a dichotomy; on one side, the bible is becoming increasingly less important, and on the other a sizable minority is becoming increasingly closer to a special brand of Christianity that is not too far from Islamic fundamentalism. The supposed lack of existential commitment was mentioned as a problem of Europe today, which appears as a real crisis, not one of moral values, but of ability to act on these values. A participant stated that in such a discussion it is important to ask what kind of Christianity will come to dominate and study how it is related to the direction in which the world is evolving.

The participants agreed that it was important to engage with religion, but were also critical of it in the larger framework of political-economic and social relations and developments. One particular delegate highlighted that the set up of the panel, by having a Middle-Eastern speak of Islam and European of Christianity in the larger discussion of democracy and politics, put the former in a rather defensive position of having to justify and defend it, which could prove to be counterproductive in such discussions. Many stressed the importance of not overemphasizing religious identities in the wider discussion of other social categories such as that of race, gender and class. Although the role of religion was discussed, there were no inclusions of discussions on class relations between "working masses", the capitalists, and the role of corporations in the world and the Mediterranean. As more and more conversations take place

around Holy Books, religious affiliations and identities, not enough include other social categories to find solutions to the increased problems the world faces today. In the meantime, corporations continue to drive the socio-economic processes that are at the heart of today's capitalist world. Interrogating and incorporating additional social categories would affect how the history of the current world order would be narrated and discursively produced in the future and this is why it is important to not silence, dismiss or exclude these categories from ongoing discussions. The panelists concluded, however, that taken the increased attention on the role of religion in the region and the globe, a religious vocabulary is also necessary to respond to positions and to the criticism of religion as such today.

The Destruction of the Common Ground

In attempting to theorize about the future, the conference sought to emphasize the importance of history and narration, as well as, the different factors and dynamics that influence our contemporary world to attempt to answer how a future could be constructed that brings the people of the Mediterranean together, rather than drive them apart. In order to engage with this question, *Dr. Umut Koldaş* (Near East Institute of the Near East University, Cyprus) opened this session, which was chaired by *Ellada Evangelou* (University of Cyprus, Cyprus). Reflecting on the title, he pointed out that we had come to Crete from destroyed ground to create a common ground and the necessity to reflect on the political-economic factors in general, and the material needs of the people in specific, when discussing the reconstruction of the Mediterranean. The Mediterranean today was a region marked by the continuation of conflicts (see the Cypriot one and the Arab-Israeli conflict), and unfulfilled promises and needs (see the failure of the European Mediterranean dialogue and the Arab Spring). The Mediterranean dialogue had promised freedom from military, economic and institutional fear. However, as an unfulfilled promise, it remained an elite project that did not fulfill needs. In the same manner, intellectual and elites severely misperceived needs in the time of the Arab Spring, which resulted in the re-imprisonment of the people through new authoritarian regimes. This was a case of misreading and decontextualizing the needs of people, which initially began with the street vendor, Mohamed Bouazizi, who burned himself as a result of

his basic needs. As such, *Koldaş* discussed the lack of solidarity across the region and urged for a structural transformation of the Mediterranean. Today, the countries of the Arab Spring are experiencing more violence, civil war and a continuation of a lack of fulfillment of material, and in many cases also spiritual, needs. In order to build solidarity across the Mediterranean, *Koldaş* argued that it is important to emphasize common values. Within this moment that is marked by the rise of populism and the continued Otherization, he concluded that it is necessary to create a common ground in the Mediterranean, away from short-term security and military alliances, so that destroyed space and identity could be reconstructed and reorganized.

While *Koldaş* analyzed what the destruction and reconstruction of the common ground meant in terms of the present, *Georges Khalil* (Forum Transregionale Studien, Germany) reminded us once more of the importance of taking a historical approach. The possibility of a common ground built on a cosmopolitan Mediterranean past cannot be regarded as a given, and thus in his presentation, *Khalil* shed light on the legacies of displacement (how these are inherited and regulated) and the theft of history in the Mediterranean. In the setting of the Mediterranean, one of the legacies cited was that of Andalusia, in which its population lived well until the fall of Grenada and the expulsion of different population groups (especially of Muslims). This led to a series of bans, as that of the veil and Arab names, in the 16th century in order to purify blood, faith and identity from Muslims. *Khalil* urged us to take up notions of purity, as well as historical legacies, in assessing the current political moment and its bombings. The second important theme of this presentation was the theft of history. In the 19th century history was reconceptualized, and imaginations and periodizations were constructed from a European point of view. These were then translated and disseminated to the rest of the world with notions such as modernity, integrity and enlightenment taking center stage. Similar to previous panels, it becomes increasingly evident that different historical narratives can connect different fragments of society and how the dominant one can come to shape the prevailing discourse in a given era. *Khalil* concluded by highlighting the importance of political consciousness, an archaeological study of the present and pursuit of democratic and inclusive humanism for the future. This panel in its

essence appears then to have brought previous panels together by contextualizing their significance in today's world. These cannot be analyzed without consulting history, and especially questioning the main narratives of this history and being critical of these. In the same manner, the analysis cannot remain on the ideational level, but must also incorporate the material needs and interests that shape the political-economic and social setting.

Discussion

The discussion began by questioning the title of the session itself, and asking what this common ground actually was, had been, and could be. What had been destroyed and what imagination of its supposed reconstruction was to be sought after? Was it simply a translation of cooperation within the same geographical space or could it mean more? In order to assess these questions, it is important to begin to imagine such a ground by looking directly at the material needs and economic relations. *Koldaş* made the point that in the meantime, what we are witnessing today is how radicals and populists are able to provide a common ground through their simple discourse that is attracting increasingly more voters. He, therefore, encouraged us to reflect on what makes us Mediterranean in order to contribute to a shared space and identity that would allow for the realization of material and economic needs and freedoms.

In contrast to the previous sessions, this discussion was directly attempting to conceptualize what the memory of the Mediterranean meant for its future, and what concrete actions should and should not be taken. Some participants sketched out the possibility of a common ground in our current age, as not just allowing for a space of equality and peace, but also one that could tackle climate change and promote sustainability. It is, thus, essential to see what role such a common ground could play. When it comes to the matter of climate change, a participant argued that the term was often revoked in discussions, especially within the Global North, who do not apply the principles of combatting it to themselves. As such it was emphasized that should a common ground be constructed, it should be done from the perspectives of both sides of the Mediterranean, rather than be merely conceptualized by the North and forcefully implemented in the South. The creation of such a ground would be destructive and

dangerous and, this is why it is essential to be aware of what is being destroyed per se and what is to be constructed. This common ground cannot be conceptualized without an awareness, assessment and interrogation of historical processes and problems, may these be of a political, social or economic nature. It cannot be that the Mediterranean comes together to speak about common problems to construct a common space, but not actually look at the experiences of inequality, expulsion and lack of mobility in the region (for one side of the Mediterranean in specific). Unlike the times of Ibn Battuta, in which one could freely travel the region of the Mediterranean, the power relations on both sides of the Mediterranean have become and continue to be increasingly unequal, thereby making it more difficult to create such a common ground.

In reference to previous sessions, it was highlighted that the discussion of a common ground cannot be isolated not just from the very real historical development and consequences in the region in specific and globe in general, but equally be void of the perspective of class analysis. We must engage and interrogate the influence and power of international capital whose wealth continues to grow. This common ground cannot be produced to further serve the interests of the one per cent and the interests of capital, but be a common ground for the 99 per cent. Reflecting on the political-economic and historical context, this common ground can equally not be a result of western interests and capital interests. Instead, it has to be a discussion and dialogue among all the involved actors, not be an imposed solution and take into account what it means for race, gender and class relations within our current political-economic and social moment.

The Meaning of the Sea

As previous sessions engaged more with what was happening on land, it must be said that the future of the Mediterranean cannot be envisioned without analyzing what role its sea has played in the past and plays in the present. Chaired by *Dr. Eleftherios Ikonomou* (Former Director of the Foundation for Hellenic Culture for the German Speaking Countries of Europe, Germany), *Dr. Hind Arroub* (Fordham University-New York, USA) opened this session by reflecting on the historical, spiritual and philosophical meaning of the Mediterranean

across civilizations. Bearing in mind how it had become a deadly space in today's world, she emphasized that it is essential to talk about the Mediterranean and its shifting geopolitical powers. She presented the importance of the sea and its role in the past and contemporary times to argue that the Mediterranean cannot be separated from its sea. *Arroub*, who echoed previous presentations, claimed that the region of the Mediterranean was marked today by instability rooted in historical power relations, processes and events that include: the Sykes-Picot Agreement, the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the Balfour Declaration, colonization, imperialism, and the application of European political, social and economic categories not appropriate for experiences of the countries in the south of the Mediterranean. Having experienced several imperialist waves, the Mediterranean finds itself today to be affected by powers outside of the region such as the Gulf countries, Russia, China and the USA. In pursuit of individualistic geopolitical and economic interests in the region, these powers have played and still play a role in the continuation of conflicts in the region, such as the Palestinian-Israeli conflict (and the establishment of Israel more general), the Syrian war, the destruction of Libya and the historical development of terrorism in general. The discussions of such conflicts in the region must also accompanied by a discussion that centralizes what goes on not just on land, but across the Mediterranean Sea in the context of migration and the EU policies related to these. According to *Arroub*, the construction of a peaceful Mediterranean away from current power struggles was only possible through the establishment of a strong educational system that informs about the different pasts of the region, a critical reflection on the role of the media in (re)producing certain discourses, and, finally, a thorough interrogation of the historical processes and developments that have taken place both on land and across sea, and, continue to determine the course of events until the present day.

This critical engagement with the role of the sea through the perspective of historical, geopolitical and economic interests was followed by a presentation by *Prof. Dr. Bernd Thum* (Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, Germany – Fondation Espace du Savoir Europe-Méditerranée (WEM)). *Thum* reflected more on the ideational meaning of the sea that could be part of the solution to current conflicts, stating that rather than approaching the region in search for a common

ground, perhaps it is more about figuring out dynamic systems of living together. Similar to previous sessions, meanings of sea were regarded as being closely linked to it as a memory space, its historical narrative of being the cradle of civilization and a space of constant exchange of people and goods. Being at the intersection of the world, it is necessary to examine the events within the settings in which they are taking place today that is marked by wars in several countries, the massive migration wave with all its cruel and negative consequences and the current state of European societies. From *Thum*'s perspective the sea is central in its role of enabling mobility (and the laws that accompany this), being a source of knowledge, allowing for imagination and the freeing of reason. He suggested that this could be done through a reflection on the history of European ideas and the power of the sea, by referring in many instances to thinkers such as Fernand Braudel. He concluded by suggesting that it is time to reconsider the notion of the sea as a threat to peace in our contemporary moment in hopes of creating a new order. *Thum* urged for the consideration of creating a guide for the future that centralized the sea and moved away from purely territorial thinking for this new Mediterranean order to be a truly functioning space of political, economic and social institutions. This panel reminded us that when remembering for the future of the Mediterranean, it is crucial to analyze the colonial history and narratives, and, the ideational and material aspects not just on its land, but also in and across its sea.

Discussion

The session led to an assessment of how the sea, which is at the heart of the Mediterranean, should be approached and how discourses around it have been and are to be produced and reproduced. The discussion, thus, interrogated the thinkers that were mentioned in the presentations, predominantly Braudel. As a Frenchman living in colonized Algeria, he was heavily criticized for his distance to Algerian literature and culture at a time in which French nuclear tests were being conducted in the Sahara. It was suggested that it is important to seek narratives of human history that see the Mediterranean from the inside rather than from the outside. This can be done by approaching those who use the sea in their everyday life, such as the captains of ships that travel for instance between

Corsica and Algiers, and among other things, face European pressures to abide by certain laws that heavily restrict their passengers. In order to expand the discussion beyond its Western orientation, it was encouraged to rethink the sea through the eyes of those who eat and live through it, those who cross it and those who are unable to use it as a result of restricting conventions and states policies.

In the discussion on how new narratives and discourses can be created, participants also highlighted the crucial importance of the media and the phenomenon of fake news today considering the role they play in constructing particular meanings of the Mediterranean Sea that are subsequently disseminated across borders. The media must, therefore, be incorporated into the discussion not just of the land, but also the sea, as it has come to present the Sea in a negative way in light of the refugee crisis. These images and discourses in our current world order create more fear and contribute to the rise of populism in which right wing forces, in turn, instrumentalize these. Rather than solely reproducing stereotypes and misconceptions in the age of media polarization, this same media was suggested as being able to play a role in fostering relations and channeling knowledge. In doing so, it was expressed that the role of the media should not be romanticized taken the loss of its credibility and the strong biases of many of the owners of media channels such as Rupert Murdoch. This was referred to as a crisis of public collective conscience. The future of the Mediterranean cannot then leave out discussions on the meanings of the sea, how narratives are created and disseminated in ideational terms, as well as, directly engaging with the material role, interests and consequences the sea has had for the very people living across from it and within it. Only in doing so can a different future of the Mediterranean be constructed, away from the unequal power relations in the present moment that have resulted from an equally unequal past.

Youth: Common Hopes and Fears

Having previously discussed the role of the history in the region, the importance of critically engaging with its narratives, and interrogating to an extent the ideational and material dynamics of its land and seas, the conference panels came to an end with a session entitled "Youth: Common Hopes and Fears." This panel

was different to the previous sessions. It was set up like a roundtable, and all the discussants were in one way or the other part of the Lazord Foundation. It focused on a specific group within a population, the youth, to present a concrete way through which the current political-economic stalement might be overcome.

Anna Manice (Lazord Foundation, USA) began by introducing herself as having co-founded the Foundation along with *Nelly Corbel* (Lazord Foundation, France/Egypt), hoping to provide job opportunities for recent graduates to work in civil society in their respective communities. The creation of the Foundation was inspired by the current political-economic and social environment in which the youth, especially in the Mediterranean, finds itself facing a deep mismatch between its qualifications, the job market and channels through which it can impact its societies. Thus, the context of this youth bulge and massive unemployment proved to be a challenge, as well as an opportunity. Accordingly, Corbel explained the Lazord Foundation as aiming to further improve soft and hard skills of young people through its one-year fellowship program. This program entails components of mentorship, training and placement in NGOs or companies to develop the fellows into sustainable leaders in all possible positions.

Whereas *Corbel* and *Manice* outlined the program, the two other panelists, *Dana Alakhras* (Lazord Foundation Fellowship Program, Jordan) and *Ohoud Wafi* (Centre d'Études et de Documentation Economiques, Juridiques et Sociales, Egypt), were previous fellows of the program who had come to share their experiences. *Alakhras* had studied finance to then discover a passion for civil society. She had the opportunity to do her fellowship at the regional telecommunications company, Zain. The CER division in which she was placed provides community support for entrepreneurs and their start-ups. *Wafi*, on the other hand, had developed an interest in working on activities evolving around children's rights during her studies, but could not find the right avenues to contribute to civil society. She was placed and worked as a coordinator for "The Young Innovators Awards Program," a project by Nahdet Al Mahrousa. The Lazord Foundation was able to provide its regional fellows with opportunities

to develop their analytical and professional skills, create their own networks and be directly involved and engaged in civil society.

The panelists turned to one of the main challenges of the political-economic and social setting for a foundation that is regional in nature, namely the challenge of mobility. *Corbel* highlighted the huge imbalances when it comes to the power of travel documents, i.e. passports and visas in the region. While for example the French passport proves to be one of the most powerful ones, the Egyptian one lets you travel almost nowhere without a visa. These strong inequalities must be considered in future plans of the foundation's expansion in the region. *Wafi*, whose research investigates the impact of the state on communities at the Sudanese Egyptian border, emphasized how the lack of mobility directly affects doing research and implementing projects. Although researchers, such as Egyptians, may face difficulties in traveling and attending conferences abroad, her French colleagues can easily come to Egypt, but struggle afterwards in conducting their research as a result of a lack in language skills and local network. Despite the difficulties in mobility, the Lazord Foundation has been enriching for its fellows, as it pushes them to create their own networks and to critically reflect on the current times in which they operate to then search and implement possible solutions that they have personally conceptualized.

With mobility in mind as a central concern, it is the wider political-economic and social conditions of our time that provide the foundation with a specific target group. Seeing that employment is crucial and affects also the ability to, for instance, have a family, the Foundation has set it as a goal to pull in the marginalized youth, who may not have access to channels but are eager to play a role as citizens and become constructive actors. The foundation, therefore, seeks out marginalized youth from public universities or from financially challenged backgrounds. In light of the current context that demands more can and must be done, *Corbel* is also working on launching a network on civic education to further combat, what she terms as the 'democratic deficit,' and focus on a similar program for high school graduates who find themselves facing equal challenges. *Alakhras* further suggested that the discussion on the incorporation of the marginalized must also include a discussion on the current refugee crisis. She stressed that it is necessary to investigate how a state deals with the crisis,

how it is affected and what it can in turn offer. Refugees as such face increased obstacles and challenges in continuing their education and navigating in the new countries. She suggested to create of a platform for refugees that could offer them ideational and materialistic support in implementing their own visions, offering them opportunities for employment and allowing them to create their own networks. This session demonstrated that within the current challenging political-economic and social moment, openings for opportunities exist within the cracks. If the previous sessions had interrogated and critiqued the past and current state of the Mediterranean and theorized about the future, this concluding panel offered a de facto way in which the Mediterranean could look into building a future and finding ways to overcome the constraints of our moment.

Discussion

This final panel opened up a discussion about the young, the lack of intellectual protection, the wider role of universities in preparing students for the job market and the target group of the fellowship of the Lazord Foundation. Participants also asked whether the fellowship programme was not limited and exclusive, since it only accepted a total of 10 fellows per year. *Corbel* explained that this is a matter of resources, capacity, teaching culture and a question of security. It had been a consideration to double the number of fellows, which would effectively mean a doubling of offered stipends. The foundation aims rather at creating strong leaders who can in turn affect more people. Universities can, but do not always play a role in expanding civic education. In fact, the foundation started through the American University in Cairo and has now established relations to other higher education institutions across the region, such as in Jordan. Another example *Corbel* mentioned was the Ma'an Arab University Alliance for Civic Engagement, which sought to create a network of universities in the region. She stated, however, that not all universities show the same degrees of interest in fostering such relations. This was further expanded on by a question on the inclusion of local economic units such as chambers of commerce, which can play an essential role in funding and fostering such foundations and networks. It was responded that the Lazord Foundation worked closely with local partners like the Gerhart Center in Egypt and Injaz in Jordan, and, is in contact

with local chambers of commerce. All of these partners become crucial in seeking to expand the program, identifying new resources and moving it forward.

The discussion carried on through questions about the political-economic and social backgrounds of the participants in the fellowship. In terms of targeting the marginalized, it was asked what languages were applied in the applications and how the youth was to be reached. While initially the foundation was more based on the English language, applications are now in both English and Arabic, and its trainings and retreats can also be offered in Arabic in order to ensure that everyone is engaged and can engage. At the same time, there is an effort to provide English classes in order to increase chances of employability and be able to expand the foundation into the northern Mediterranean as well. Having touched on the political-economic background of its participants, questions were also raised as to how gender was conceptualized within the foundation. The panelists highlighted that gender played a great role from the start. When the programme was launched, the majority of applications came from women as one of the requirements was that one had to be a fresh university graduate. Male graduates were thereby struggling in applying as a result of compulsory military service. Since applications were opened up, they have become fairly equally distributed. In terms of curricula, although gender is not directly discussed within the fellowship, it is incorporated in the wider sessions and discussions on human rights, values and tolerance. This session concluded the panels of the conference by humanizing the debate and shedding light on a group within the population of the Mediterranean that finds itself struggling on a day-to-day basis. Considering that the conference focused more on historical developments, narratives and memories of land and sea, rather than social categories within these, such as class, this session on youth demonstrated the necessity of incorporating social categories in the conceptualization of strategies to bring about change within the constraints of the political-economic and social conditions in our contemporary world.

Summing Up: Lessons Learned

The conference came full circle, as it concluded with its final public session at the location at which it started – the Basilica of San Marco. This session began with words of reflection by *Prof. Dr. Udo Steinbach*, who had initially expressed his thoughts at the opening panel. He once more considered the location of the conference, stating that there could not have been a location more suitable than Crete and that its role cannot be overlooked in the events that have unfolded across the Mediterranean, which had been a stage for wars and disasters. These events, developments and ideas have been touched upon in the days of the conference, which at first were accompanied by some sense of optimism considering the distance we had had from reality. However, the Mediterranean today finds itself in a critical state, as millions migrate across its sea and land, the economic state continues to decline, a state like that of Israel continues to ignore international law with no real opposition fighting against it and Islam is being ideologized and instrumentalized by the few to kill others. *Steinbach* emphasized that though the panels of the conference were mainly concerned with reinventing the Mediterranean through its historical traditions, there was little emphasis on what is unfolding in the Mediterranean today on a day-to-day basis. He concluded with the words that "yes, we have fiddled, but the question is whether we are in a position to extinguish the fire."

Prof. Dr. Sahar Hamouda continued with her own reflections on where to proceed from here, stating that this appears to be a matter of perspective. According to one's own specialization and interests, may these be of (social) sciences, environment, history or literature, a certain set of solutions to the world's problems are prioritized. With several references to authors such as Homer, *Hamouda* contended that it is in our humanity that the common ground can be found and it is through literature that the universal values on which it is to be built can be identified. Common ground can provide a space for exchange and coming together, but equally one that can separate us seeing the current moment in which our interactions are characterized by obstacles of mobility, nation states and nationalities. The questions were posed whether one shall embrace the memory of cosmopolitanism or current nationalism; or whether it shall be a discussion of

rather multiple shifting constructed identities instead? *Hamouda* emphasized that it must be kept in mind that these questions remain the privilege of the elite and that it becomes a matter of how much of the population can be reached in countries, such as Egypt, where the majority of the population finds itself struggling to get through the day. Thus, she pointed out that though hope for the future of the Mediterranean is not lost, it can only be thought of as common on fair and equal footing, which no longer entails the application and imposition of Northern projects onto the South, who are in turn merely expected to follow. With reference to Michel Foucault, *Hamouda* echoed that knowledge is power, and that power lies in those who produce it, but also hide it. As young generations seek to find ways and opportunities to push through the cracks, she concluded with words similar to those of *Steinbach*, asking, whether we could once more reinvent ourselves or whether we were just fiddling?

The last presentation in the summing-up session was by *Ferdinand Richard* (Roberto Cimetta Fund, France) who introduced himself and the work he does in three refugee shelters in Istanbul, Beirut and Kurdistan to then express his thoughts on the conference. He argued that that bearing in mind the centrality of the falsification of history across the world, we cannot merely consider fast solutions, but must study long lasting ones that consider the horizontality and multiplicity of space for the construction of a common ground. According to him, this could be done by replacing vertical hierarchies with smaller installations that facilitate, for instance, intercultural dialogue. *Richard* argued that the discussion for the future must include a discussion on capitalism (and the possibility of ethical capitalism), identity (both physical and virtual), mobility, the use of technology and ways through which organic networks of peripheries can become centers in their own right. He concluded by stating that in moving forward it is important to consider the role of a global union of youth that is currently at work, which seeing the age we are in, can communicate in a common language across borders. Thus, while theorizing about the past, present and future through the memory of the Mediterranean is a crucial step, it is also necessary to see how practical steps beyond these discussions can be taken in hopes of a Mediterranean future that is no longer characterized by its violent past and present, instability, crises and unequal power relations altogether.

Discussion

Within this final round, participants reflected on what had been said in the conference and brought the discussions into the present moment. It was expressed that with the current unfolding events in the Mediterranean, conflicts cannot be solved in ways in which they were previously approached. Until recently, it was an approach of an exclusive, rather than inclusive nature. It was suggested that the Middle East and the different cultures must be perceived as equal partners in order to actively contribute to the future of the Mediterranean. The national agenda must be replaced with one based on common values and economic interests to no longer be fiddling, but to actively discuss alternatives that may have momentarily appeared in the context of the Arab uprisings in which the youth felt politically empowered. In the same way, this new agenda must consider a transformation of the education system to be more in line with our current age, as well as, an interrogation of the domination of corporations and capital that inhibits a fair distribution of wealth within and across societies.

It was suggested that the young generation, which is more politicized than previous generations, must realize its assets considering the availability of partners of cooperation and resources. It was questioned however, to what extent this is possible when there are real dangers of persecution, as witnessed with the arrests of Aya Hijazi and Mohammed Hassanein in Egypt for their work with street children. It was responded that one needs to make the decision of either leaving or fighting and that if the choice is to fight, then the fight cannot be fought alone and without alliances. The Arab uprisings resulted in a domino-effect that, according to a participant, went beyond national boundaries and led to a global movement. Whereas older generations cannot instruct the youth on how to stage and organize this fight, it cannot deprive the youth of the hope for a better future.

It is important, nonetheless, to consider ways through which the struggle can be organized so that when the time comes, bridges are there to be crossed. A reference was made to recent German history and the fall of the Berlin Wall. While government officials hardly knew each other post the fall of the Wall, civil society organizations existed that had identified partners with whom connections

and relations could be established. Today, this means informing ourselves about the current political-economic and social settings in order to conceptualize the next steps. It was suggested that in light of the partially realistic and partially utopian perspective assumed in the conference, it is now necessary to reinvent oneself and discover the space in which one can operate to achieve freedom and equality away from the identities that have been historically imposed upon us. Reflecting on the Arab uprisings and the huge potential of change in 2011 and 2012, this cannot be the end of the story, but merely the beginning.

After this fruitful discussion, the conference officially came to an end with the closing remarks from *Dr. Eleftherios Ikonomou*, who expressed his gratitude towards the sponsors, participants and all that had been involved in the initial planning stage of this conference, in taking more concrete steps of moving it to Crete and the many talks leading up to this point with administrators and governors. It is only with all their help that this conference became a reality.

Conclusion

This conference seems to have established a space in which the memory of the Mediterranean was reflected on to engage with what this could mean for us today, and also, tomorrow. The Mediterranean past and its dominant discourse were questioned and engaged with by the panelists and participants, leading to critically minded discussions that can give us guidelines on how to conceptualize the future. Taken what we can learn from the recent violent past of European colonialism and the imposition of its ideas that have lasted until the present day, the participants shed light on what is crucial to consider and what must be avoided. It seems then that it is up to future discussions, which must consider the political-economic context, as well as the array of social categories that coevolve, to theorize about the concrete steps through which change can be brought about in the region to no longer be making global headlines merely associated with violence, deaths and crises.

Remember for the Future – The Mediterranean as a Memory Space: Delegates' List

Dr. Polyxeni Adam-Veleni (Director of Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki, Greece)

Dana Alakhras (Lazord Foundation Fellowship Program, Jordan)

Stavros Arnaoutakis (Governor of Crete, Greece)

Dr. Hind Arroub (Fulbright senior lecturer and scholar based at Fordham University-New York, USA)

Prof. Dr. Yamina Bettahar (Prof. Dr. in Sociology & History of Sciences / Université de Lorraine & MSH Lorraine, France)

Costa Carras (Vice President, Europa Nostra, Greece)

Giusy Checola (PhD candidate at University Paris 8 Vincennes Saint-Denis, France)

Prof. Dr. Murat Çizakça (Professor of Islamic Economics and Finance at KTO Karatay University Konya, Turkey / Adj. Prof. at Luxembourg School of Finance, University of Luxembourg, Luxembourg)

Nelly Corbel (Vice President of the Board, Lazord Foundation, France/Egypt)

Dr. Vera Costantini (Assistant Professor of Turkish Studies and Economic History at the "Ca' Foscari" University of Venice, Italy)

Angie Cotte (Roberto Cimetta Fund, France)

Dimitrios P. Droutsas (Former Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs, Greece)

Ellada Evangelou (Researcher / Community Worker in Culture – University of Cyprus, Cyprus)

Nada Farah (Project Manager at Ettijahat – Independent Culture, Lebanon)

Henrietta Goelet (John Goelet Foundation, USA)

John Goelet (Farmer / Entrepreneur, USA)

Prof. Dr. Sahar Hamouda (Director, Alexandria and Mediterranean Research Center, Bibliotheca Alexandrina / Professor, Department of English Language and Literature, Alexandria University, Egypt)

Dr. Eleftherios Ikonomou (Former Director of the Foundation for Hellenic Culture for the German Speaking Countries of Europe, Germany)

Sarrah Kassem (Ph.D. Student, University of Tübingen, Germany)

John Kelly (Mira Kelly; International Fundraising Consultancy, United Kingdom)

Georges Khalil (Forum Transregionale Studien, Germany)

Dr. Krystel Khoury (Anthropologist & Cultural Manager, Arab Theatre Training Centre, Lebanon / Roberto Cimetta Fund, France)

Dr. Umut Koldaş (Director of the Near East Institute of the Near East University in Nicosia, Cyprus)

Dr. Nora Lafi (Senior Researcher (Historian) at Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO) Berlin, Germany)

Paul Lassus (Lawyer, Paris Bar, France)

Anna Manice (Co-Founder and President, Lazord Foundation, USA)

Henry Manice (Entrepreneur, USA)

Aristea Plevri (Deputy Mayor for Culture, Heraklion)

Ferdinand Richard (President of the Roberto Cimetta Fund, France)

Prof. Dr. Caroline Y. Robertson-von-Trotha (ZAK | Centre for Cultural and General Studies, KIT – The Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, Germany / German Network of the Anna Lindh Foundation, Germany)

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Orhan Silier (Historian, Turkey)

Dimitris Stefanakis (Author, Greece)

Prof. Dr. Udo Steinbach (Director of the Governance Center Middle East | North Africa / Humboldt-Viadrina Governance Platform, Germany)

Dr. Rupert Graf Strachwitz (Executive Director of the Maecenata Foundation, Germany)

Prof. Dr. Bernd Thum (Professor Emeritus, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) / Foundation Euro-Mediterranean Knowledge Space (WEM), Germany)

Ohoud Wafi (Host Researcher at CEDEJ (Centre d'Études et de Documentation Economiques, Juridiques et Sociales), Egypt)

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