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Critically Mediterranean

Temporalities, Aesthetics, and Deployments
of a Sea in Crisis

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Heritage Washed Ashore: Underwater Archaeology and Regionalist Imaginaries in the Central Mediterranean

Naor Ben-Yehoyada

Anyone following the rise in international attention to unauthorized migration across the Mediterranean in recent years might suspect that this would push scholars to reexamine their views of the contemporary Mediterranean. Yet the prevailing set of views about the relationship between modernity and the Mediterranean has prevented such a consideration. On the one hand, most historians agree that the Mediterranean of premodern glories no longer exists, even if they disagree both on the definition and on the timing of the shift from a Mediterranean to a modern world (Ben-Yehoyada 2014a). On the other hand, when scholars of the contemporary Mediterranean seek to reconcile the social realities we encounter with this historiographical position, we find ourselves at an impasse. If we apply premodernist definitions of the Mediterranean to the present, we either run the risk of anachronism (creative or otherwise),

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Critically Mediterranean, Mediterranean Perspectives,

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-71764-7_12

or explicitly declare some elements in our analysis as relics of a premodern past (attitudes, practices, relationships, societies, and so forth).¹

What perspective do we need to adopt in order to bring our accounts of the contemporary state of affairs on an analytical par with reconstructions of the sea's pasts? To address this question, I follow the clue that lies in the name that Pope Francis used to christen the Mediterranean, particularly its seabed: "a massive grave" (Vatican 2013). This image draws our attention from the surface to the bottom of the sea. In the current Mediterranean, several practices and infrastructures that either lie on the seabed or pass through it play a key role in cross-marine connections. Motorized navigation and fishing, gas pipelines, underwater optic fiber cables, and maritime archaeology all emblemize modernity and its technological advances. At the same time, these infrastructures furnish a steady stream of reimaginings of Mediterranean pasts: when people talk about these new forms of cross-marine connections, they often frame them through past moments of such connections. In other words, when people make sense of these kinds of connections across the sea, they relate between the past, present, and future Mediterraneans that they share.

It should not surprise us that the connections sustaining social life—say under nation-states—are related to the kinds of collectivities that people around the Mediterranean imagine in the past and claim they are merely reproducing in the present (even if the shape of that relationship is under constant discussion: Gellner 1983; Anderson 1991; Herzfeld 1982). Yet modern Mediterraneans are confronted with two obstacles that most of their nationalist fellow-nostalgics avoid: the present they share is transnational rather than national (or supranational); and the scholars of those pasts which they share argue that those Mediterranean pasts are long gone.

This chapter examines the interplay between transnational connections and regionalist imaginaries in the Mediterranean. To probe this interplay, I examine the trajectory of the "Dancing Satyr"—a bronze statue that

reached the 500 meter deep seabed of the Channel of Sicily at a certain point between the fourth and second centuries BCE and resurfaced towards the end of the twentieth century. In March 1997, a Sicilian trawler *Capitan Ciccio* returned to its homeport in Mazara del Vallo, Sicily, with the left leg of a 2.5 meter high bronze statue. A year later, in March 1998, the same trawler reported to have recovered the torso and head of the same statue in its net while operating in the same fishing zone—in international waters between the Italian island of Pantelleria and Cap Bon, the tip of the Tunisian coast. The statue underwent restoration before embarking on a global tour: from the Italian Chamber of Deputies in Rome (2003) to Japan (2005), and to the Louvre's exhibition on Praxiteles and Attic sculpture (2007). It is now on display in a museum dedicated to it in Mazara. The discovery of the satyr triggered investigations against the captain of the Sicilian trawler that found the statue for suspected illicit possession and attempted selling of items of Italian national heritage (Frau 1998). It pushed Italian actors to step up their public accusations against the US-based underwater archaeologist Robert Ballard (whose other discoveries include the *Titanic* and the *Bismarck*), who had been surveying parts of the central Mediterranean seabed, for looting the maritime heritage of Mediterranean countries (Bohlen 1998). In another branch of the story, one of the leading provincial mafiosi was suspected of attempting to organize the theft of the statue before its transportation to Rome for restoration (Giacalone 2009). According to some of the key actors involved, the discovery also contributed to the signing of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (Tusa 2004).

Any such discovery or resurfacing depends on a healthy dose of luck. Yet, in its voyage from the bottom of the sea to its home in Mazara, the satyr also revealed the more permanent inhabitants of the world it had to traverse: motorized seabed trawling, underwater reconnaissance technologies, and archaeological maritime heritage projects.² Motorized trawlers provide the most frequent contact that contemporary maritime mobility shares with its historical predecessors (Ziniti 2010). Since the 1960s, hundreds of trawlers have ploughed the central Mediterranean's seabed, dredging up anything they encounter, including ancient relics (Tusa 2009).

¹For their comments and suggestions, I would like to thank Sebastiano Tusa and Giovanna Fiume, as well as Jessica Marglin, Daniel Hershenzon, Corey Tazzara, Cyprian Broodbank, Katherine McDonald, Yasser Elhariry, and Edwige Tamalet Talbayev. All inaccuracies or shortcomings remain mine alone. Some parts of the first section are elaborated from my contribution to the discussion with Giovanna Fiume of Horden & Kinoshita's 2014 *A Companion to Mediterranean History* in *Quaderni Storici* 153 (3): 841–866.

²Other combinations of transnational connections and regionalist imaginaries abound, such as the dynamics following the discovery of offshore gas reserves along the eastern Mediterranean continental shelf (Reed and Krauss 2014; Antreasyan 2013).

These fishers usually find amphorae. More recently, nets have contained human remains from Europe-bound migrants' shipwrecked vessels. Through all these kinds of resurfacing, trawlers provide the constant flow of contact with the sea's remote and recent pasts. If modern trawling provides the casual discovery of underwater artefacts, underwater imagery technologies—such as sonars and submarine robots—enable in-depth examination of the sites of discovery. Such discoveries have sent maritime archaeologists to the ever deeper seabed of international waters. While state-funded archaeological institutions usually lack the funds to operate such technologies on a regular basis, the companies that construct underwater pipelines and optical fiber cables, as well as national navies' submarine units, use them extensively throughout the central Mediterranean.

Most accounts of these maritime archaeological discoveries separate the various infrastructural and technological conditions of accessing the past from the relics they enable us to access. As a result, this separation of the story of the relic's voyage to the seabed from that of its reemergence implicitly judges the various current transmarine forms of connection as dissimilar from any form of premodern connectivity. In *The Corrupting Sea*, for example, the Mediterranean ceased to exist as such with the advent of steam shipping and the collapse of the kinds of coastal and micro-regional connections that have characterized it in earlier periods (Horden and Purcell 2000: 3, 34). As a result, any kind of continuity that people wish to draw between the past and the present is deemed discursive manipulation of the past, if not ideological regionalism. Against this view of *dis-similarity* and *discontinuity*, I offer the story of the satyr to argue that our accounts of the modern Mediterranean must show how the present constellation combines *similarities* to the sea's previous lives with the *continuities* that region-making projects chart as they conjure up these pasts. While in this chapter I postulate more than substantiate these similarities, they condition the kinds of continuities that people draw from the ancient maritime pasts they access and the transnational present they inhabit.

The similarities that interest me here appear in the infrastructure of maritime connection and movement (Larkin 2013). Such a focus permits us to compare moments across the premodern-modern divide. Ancient varieties include means for navigation, grain and liquid storage, and long-distance communication on one level, which facilitate constellations of reciprocity, redistribution, and exchange (Harris 2005b: 15–19; Algazi 2005; Broodbank 2006). These ancient varieties structurally resemble

the maritime infrastructures that emblemize modernity: pipelines and optic fiber cables, nautical technology and skills, which facilitate energy distribution schemes, migration and interception networks, and social networks and surveillance schemes (Fiume and Ben-Yehoyada 2016).

My formulation of connectivity is made to draw our attention to the different kinds of *relations* that “connectivity” permits. In *The Corrupting Sea*, Horden and Purcell define connectivity as “the various ways in which microregions cohere, both internally and also one with another in aggregates that may range in size from small clusters to something approaching the entire Mediterranean” (2000: 123). Their use of the term encompasses various kinds of relation because it foregrounds the evidence of connection sustaining all of them. As a result, our eyes are trained on the long history of such connectivity, and the differences in these relations (economic, political, social, cultural) go out of focus (Algazi 2005: 242). As a result, modern regionalist projects disappear from view for two reasons: to examine them, we need to distinguish between connections and relations in a way that “connectivity” combines; and we need to examine together the two periods that all Mediterraneanist historiography keeps apart—the modern and the premodern.

The *continuity* that interests me is that which people themselves (including scholars) construct between the present state of their cross-marine relations and past constellations: how people conjure up past moments of relationship—such as ancient moments of connectedness and imperial expansion across the sea—and how they project them onto their relationships in these emerging scenes.

By addressing the relationship between similarities in connectivity and the continuities that regionalist projects conjure, I attempt to achieve two goals: to sketch a contemporary account of the modern Mediterranean following the demise of the sea's premodern glory; and to show the role of Mediterraneanist imaginaries—the schemes of relatedness across the sea that people project onto these transmarine connections—in shaping the current Mediterranean moment. This is not the only way to go about such an examination of the current or modern Mediterranean. In a recent example of this direction, Jessica Marglin articulated the term “connectivity” in ways that reconcile it with modern transimperial networks and diasporic identity (2014).

If we differentiate infrastructural similarities between past and present Mediterraneans from the continuities (of identities, relationships, and

obligations) that people conjure between them, we would be able to examine how exactly the sea has reemerged as a maritime constellation in our times—in part resembling its past incarnations, in part shining in the light that these incarnations shed on this present Mediterranean.

FISHING FOR THE PAST: THE STORY OF THE *SATIRO*

Let us begin with the version of the fishing captain who brought the satyr to Mazara del Vallo, Francesco Adragna, as he told it to the editor of the book celebrating the satyr and the story of its discovery (Curti 2004). According to Adragna, the first time his trawler, the *Capitan Ciccio*, had fished over that specific part of the Channel of Sicily, the ship stopped. In such situations, which happen often when the net runs into some underwater obstacle, the crew hauls in the net to assess the damage. This time, the net came onboard intact. Nevertheless, the captain stayed out of that area for some time. Then, in March 1997, the *Capitan Ciccio* found itself again over the same zone because of the strong winds and currents that day. At the end of the trawling run, when the crew was hauling in the net, the ship's hydraulic hauling machinery worked more heavily than usual for a short while—a sign of a heavy net—and then suddenly rolled faster again. Once the crew had hauled in the net, upon opening it on the aft deck they saw the leg of a bronze statue. The captain ordered his crew to go back to their fishing routine, and asked his colleagues for advice over the radio. They consulted him to throw overboard the relic to avoid all the various problems and hassles that befall captains who collect such items. In fact, many fishers the world over collect various amphorae that their nets encounter, and often face accusations for illicit holding of archaeological relics. Yet against his colleagues' advice, the captain decided to keep the bronze leg because, according to him, "already looking at the marvelous relic, we became ecstatic and fascinated. It would have been a sin to throw it overboard. What if we kept fishing in the same zone and found the rest?" (10).

The *Capitan Ciccio* continued to fish in the Channel of Sicily for several days until it entered port, in time to sell its fish for Easter at the end of March (importantly, no report or person actually notes the exact day of the bronze leg's initial discovery). Once in Mazara, the captain went to declare the relic he had brought in from the sea. The naval officer at the port authority told him to take the bronze leg to the office of cultural heritage in town. According to the captain, at that point he requested and

received an authorization to transport the relic in his car, in case he was stopped by the police and accused of illicitly withholding archaeological treasures. At the office, the captain handed the leg over together with the geographical position of the event at sea. This ended the first chapter of the satyr's tale.

Several months later, in July 1997, the Provincial Superintendent of Cultural Heritage prepared for a survey of the seabed around the original discovery's position. The extended survey was needed, since the geographical position at the moment of discovery does not exactly index the position of the shipwreck at the bottom of the sea, for several reasons. First, because the captain marked his trawler's position at the end of an hours-long fishing route, whereas the net could have encountered the shipwreck at any point along the miles-long route. Second, because the position marked the boat's location on the surface of the sea, not where the relics lie, about 500 meters below sea level. Nevertheless, the Superintendent of Cultural Heritage declared the survey successful, because the reconnaissance attempts produced "targets" for further inspection: several locations of abnormal mass, including of metallic substance. This brought the marine archaeologists of the Sicilian superintendent to conclude that "the presence of the rest of the load [carried by the ship that transported the satyr] was anything but unlikely" (Tusa 2004: 62).

The survey did not find any more relics. Nor did the *Capitan Ciccio*, which, according to Captain Adragna, avoided the site for almost a year, so as not to "mix up the seabed" by dragging the trawling net over it. Then, a year after his initial discovery, Adragna learned from a television show that "an American submarine was going around the Channel of Sicily looking for underwater treasures." With news of Dr. Ballard's presence, Adragna decided to resume his trawling over the area:

After having fished the leg, our fishing runs would stop a mile before the 'hot' zone. Now that I knew of the presence of the Americans, I concluded that if the sculpture would be recuperated by the Americans, who would then make some beautiful exhibition of it in who knows what museum, I preferred running the risk of damaging the satyr as long as I knew it remained in Italian hands [...] What sense did it make to stop fishing [over the zone]? Who would stand to benefit from our safety measures? We certainly didn't want it to be the Americans! (Curti 2004: 12)

Then, on March 3, just about a year after the discovery of the bronze leg, the *Capitan Ciccio* dredged up in its net the torso and head of the same statue. The captain informed the naval base immediately, and returned to port the following night, greeted by leading Sicilian archaeological experts, the press, and the Italian Minister of Cultural Heritage (“*Beni Culturali*”), who declared that the crew would receive their “finder’s prize,” 25 % of the statue’s assessed value, 700 million Italian lire at the time (about half a million dollars today).

Since its arrival ashore, the satyr raised many more questions, doubts, and mutual accusations among national and regional officials and between them and the crew. The officials of the Sicilian Cultural Heritage Superintendent accused the crew of mismanaging the relic. The crew had handed over the relic clean of mud. Upon their arrival, they explained that they had cleaned the statue while it was still hanging in the net above the water, to ease its hauling in. Some archaeological experts accused the crew of handing over the statue in a state different from that in which they had found it. The same issue raised the suspicion of the Provincial Attorney General that the statue was not found that night at sea, but that the crew—aided by some functionaries of the superintendency—had actually been trying to sell it on the illicit market for ancient relics before handing it over to the state (the investigation was archived without any indictment; Ziniti 2003). In response, Captain Adragna accused the state of “not wanting to pay the real price” of the finder’s prize. Together with the trawler’s two owners, he requested that the satyr be restituted to them, because they had found it in international waters (*La Repubblica* 1998). According to him, this is why the minister declared the prize on the evening of the trawler’s return to Mazara, long before the statue was appraised, six months later, in Rome. Moreover, the captain also contested the validity of the accusation leveled at him: “illegal possession of cultural assets belonging to the state” (Curti 2004, 18):

But which state? If it came from [Tunisia], I could have understood. But we were 65 [nautical] miles from the Italian coast! [...] We didn’t steal anything. If someone can lament losing something that belonged to them, it is the sea!

In the interview, the captain described in the same rancorous tone the ceremony for the unveiling of the satyr in the Italian Presidential Palace in Rome in 2003:

I didn’t expect them to shout “*Evviva il capitano!*” But some recognition would have been expected. They didn’t even mention the crew of the *Capitan Ciccio*. I entered Montecitorio with pride and came out with disdain [...] At the end, it was us who had found and gifted this once-in-a-millennium marvel to everyone.

Asked by his interviewer what he thought of the law following the events of the previous six years, Captain Adragna concluded: “It does not encourage the cooperation of us fishermen—the principal discoverers at sea—and the state” (19).

AGAINST THE (SECOND) “NORTHERN INVASION”

Whatever one might think about whether the miraculous double discovery of the satyr had actually occurred as reported or not, several key themes in the story—which other accounts corroborate—outline the interplay of similarities and continuities between the present and past transmarine constellations. By following these themes we will be able to see how this interplay shapes the role that cultural heritage—tangible artifacts that groups claim to have inherited from (their) past generations—plays in Mediterraneanist projects, be they national or international, which promote regionalist cultural agendas about the sea’s past, present, and future.

First among them is the dependence of national underwater cultural heritage officials on those forms of movement and connection that emblemize modern transmarine connectivity. First of them are motorized trawlers, which dredge up the things that lie on the seabed daily.³ The long history of maritime heritage—near the coast and in deeper waters, in Sicily and elsewhere—is paved with stories of fishers’ discoveries, filling up the Mediterranean nautical chart with around 3000 sites (Tusa and Li Vigni 2010). Until the spread of motorized seabed trawling and the technological development of scuba-diving (both accelerated after the Second World War), underwater archaeology was limited to shallow waters mostly along the coastlines. Artefacts that are found in shallow waters close to the shore, and well within the 12 nautical miles of territorial waters—safely within that part of the sea that is still considered the watery extension of

³In the few cases that end up with an important discovery, these fishers’ operations are celebrated as the main way to access relics of the past. What remains uncovered is the damage that these trawling nets incur on the seabed—flora, fauna, and archaeological relics included.

national territory—are self-evident candidates for naturalization as national heritage like their landed counterparts (Herzfeld 1991). In addition, such relics' distance from the shore and the shallow depth around them also facilitate their discovery and excavation. Artefacts that reside in deeper parts of the Mediterranean seabed differ from the shallow-dwellers in two respects: first, they have waited longer for the technological capacity to find them either casually or during a directed expedition; second, their location does not lend itself so easily to national incorporation by any one state. As a result, the multisided struggle among various states over access to such relics and their control combines the technological, political, and cultural/ideological dimensions of such underwater artefacts' resurfacing. The technological dimension emerges from the kinds of transmarine technologies that participate in the artefacts' discovery and recuperation. The political and cultural dimensions emerge from the set of actors (national and world heritage organizations, archaeologists, treasure hunters) and their interaction, which take place across borders as much as within them. The wider story of the satyr's resurfacing and reappropriation exemplifies this.

The second theme that the satyr's story foregrounds is the transnational (rather than just transmarine) aspect of this type of artefact. As Captain Adragna protested, the statue lay at the bottom of the sea far from Italy's territorial waters. More generally, such relics' location at the bottom of the sea detaches them from any immediate and self-evident claim to ownership by any one state. Instead, in the case of occasional discoveries (as against directed expeditions), several states related to different moments in the relic's life could have made claims to some binding relationship to it until recently. According to Article 149 of the 1982 Montego Bay United Nations (UN) Convention on the Law of the Sea, "Archaeological and historical objects" (United Nations 1982):

All objects of an archaeological and historical nature found in the Area shall be preserved or disposed of for the benefit of mankind as a whole, particular regard being paid to the preferential rights of the State or country of origin, or the State of cultural origin, or the State of historical and archaeological origin.⁴

⁴The term "the Area" refers to "the seabed and ocean floor and subsoil thereof, beyond the limits of national jurisdiction" (United Nations 1982, 82/31363: 26).

In the concrete terms of the current Mediterranean, the states whose preferential rights should enjoy such "particular regard" are (1) the state whose flag the finders fly, (2) the state that reigns in the ancient place of the statue's production (or its place of holding), if such locations could be established, and (3) those whose territorial waters abut the sea stretch of the relic's discovery. Of these three categories, the first depends on anything from happenstance, through concerted effort, to an established advantage in access to the required technologies. On the contrary, the second and third (geographical contiguity, historical relevance) combine to give the general transnational constellation a regional, that is, a Mediterranean shape.

The specific shape of the satyr's transnational trajectory becomes clear when we consider that Dr. Robert Ballard's expedition and the US Navy nuclear submarine it deployed certainly belonged to neither of these latter two categories of geographically contiguous or historically germane states. Moreover, the expeditions drew several Mediterranean actors' attention after Ballard's team published their findings of a cluster of Roman shipwrecks in the Channel of Sicily. The cluster of shipwrecks are located at a depth of about 800 meters near Skerki Bank, at the north-western edges of the Channel of Sicily, about 80 nautical miles north-west of Trapani, at the western tip of Sicily (Wilford 1997; McCann 2004). By usurping the presumed right of Mediterranean countries to discover and maintain their own buried cultural treasures, Ballard reenacted "the Northern Invasion."⁵ As in the aftermath of the original "Northern Invasion" (Hershenzon 2016), the "invasion" accelerated Mediterranean nation-states' attempts at uniting against their common Atlantic adversary.⁶ The result was the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, which the United States did not join, and which expands the relevant articles from the 1982 Montego Bay Convention into an attempted regulation regime (UNESCO 2009). Most relevant for us is

⁵In Molly Greene's words, "The northern invasion argument asserts that the Dutch, the English and the French swarmed into the Mediterranean with their superior sailing ships early in the seventeenth century, and seized control of the sea's commercial, financial and maritime life [...] This picture has been endorsed by many others, and is easily the dominant model for the Mediterranean world in the seventeenth century" (2002: 42).

⁶Of the six states that initially sought to include a regime for protection of underwater heritage in the UN regulations, four are from the Mediterranean (Italy, Greece, Malta, and Tunisia) and the other two host the first legs of Europe's Atlantic colonial expansion: Portugal and Cape Verde (Scovazzi 2012: 754).

the way in which the Convention was designed to stimulate regional, bilateral, and multilateral accords for the programming and management of archaeological research in extraterritorial waters. In other words, the Convention unfolds on a global scale to articulate and promote actual collaborations on lower scales. Palumbo's conclusion about UNESCO and the cultural politics of heritage in Sicily definitely applies to this transnational set of scales of action: "If conflict and aggression are basic characters of local (and regional) political scenes, the presence of a self-proclaiming universalistic and peaceful transnational institution directly produced and reproduced them [...] Like every political process, the construction of a heritage scenario produces conflicts at each level (or step) of its processing procedures" (Palumbo 2011: 8; see also Palumbo 2003).

In this Sicilian and Italian mobilization against the American looters, "The Mediterranean" emerged as a palpable scale of mobilization and recognizable battle cry for cultural-political protectionism. The defending actor combined subnational (Sicilian) and state-national (Italian) scales;⁷ the overarching universalistic umbrella was global in aspiration, if not in actual reach (UNESCO); and all converged on the regional scale of the Mediterranean, both conjuring it and granting it further palpability. Together, the two themes—archaeologists' reliance on fishers' transmarine operations and the transnational power dynamics of underwater archaeology and the cultural politics of heritage—reveal how underwater surveying technologies, transnational political imaginaries, and national interests shape each other. Neither Ballard's arrival nor the satyr's discovery were the first triggers of this dynamic. Yet both events raised the stakes of underwater cultural heritage in the contemporary central Mediterranean:

It was in fact the real archaeological *raid*, conducted by Ballard in a zone that is geographically and culturally contiguous with Italian and Tunisian territorial waters, as well as the cultural pertinence of the *plundered* wrecks and the relics to the ancient community of the Mediterranean, which set off an almost total and violent reaction on the part of the international scientific community and government authorities. (Tusa 2004: 43; emphases added)

In the Channel of Sicily, regional multilateral negotiations towards such a bilateral accord envisioned a "museum of the history and the culture of

⁷As Sicily is an official region of the Italian state, this subnational scale would merit the term "regional," but in order not to confuse it with transnational regions such as the Mediterranean, I've termed it "subnational" throughout this chapter.

the Channel of Sicily." The idea behind the museum was "to strengthen [literally, to weld again] Mediterranean identity and civilization" (Tusa 2004: 67–68). Since the projected museum was supposed to treat the Channel of Sicily, the adjective "Mediterranean" would refer to the character of a geographic area smaller in scope. In their fear of the technologically superior expeditions that the post-Cold War US Navy can furnish to American archaeologists—with nuclear submarines and advanced reconnaissance technologies—Sicilian, Tunisian, and Italian archaeologists and cultural heritage officials have come to reconsider their shared interest regarding ancient relics in the Mediterranean (Scovazzi 2010). In the process, they have harnessed the various technologies at their disposal to excavate and represent relics from a "civilization" and an "identity" that they share and that excludes the United States.⁸ The regionalist shape of transnational action took the shape of Mediterraneanism.

The thread that connects the struggle over the satyr and the project of the museum exemplify Tunisian–Sicilian "kinshipping" of sorts: reaching back to the distant past to inform and then change present political relations (Smail and Shryock 2011: 32, 52). As in other segmentary dynamics (Dresch 1988; Shryock 1997; Herzfeld 2005; Palumbo 2010), this Mediterraneanist heritage project alluded to the shared sources of identity that distinguishes those potentially allied with each other against their to-be-excluded Others. In the Channel of Sicily, "political relations are relative and dynamic [...] [They] are best stated as tendencies to conform to certain values in certain situations, and the value is determined by the structural relationships of the persons who compose the situation" (Evans-Pritchard 1940: 137; quoted in Dresch 1986: 317). This does not make the project surrounding the satyr purely reactive or entirely reducible to present dynamics. The kinds of continuities that various actors proclaimed had their canons of probability. These measures for a successful conjuring of the past for present purposes include all the material conditions that underwater artefacts and their accessibility provide for such projects, but they also include the kinds of relations that people can make between past and present as well as among themselves in the present through the past. These kinds of relations depend on the transnational political imaginaries

⁸These various projects include mapping initiatives, the construction of underwater diving routes near shipwrecks, such as "CULTura, TURismo Attivo e Sostenibile" and ARCHAEO MAP ("Soprintendenza Del Mare—CULTURA.S." 2015; "ARCHAEO MAP—Archaeological Management Policies" 2015).

that people invoke when they try to convince each other that they are related and in what way exactly they are related (Ben-Yehoyada 2014b).

Moreover, the conjuring up of the Mediterranean as the shape of Sicilian-Tunisian transnational alignment did not oscillate between the bifurcated scale of the global and the local. It rather set a specifically regionalist alternative to this duo of extremes. This alternative had national (Italian, Tunisian), subnational (Sicilian), and regional (Italian-Tunisian, Sicilian-Tunisian) elements. Global goals, collectives, and values appeared through a combination of the UN and the United States. Article 149 of the Montego Bay Convention cites "the benefit of mankind as a whole" (United Nations 1982). The United States Navy has been operating for some time now under the belief, which it strives to spread, that its vessels' actions pursue this goal (Ho 2004). Yet the US Navy's capacity to collect underwater ancient artefacts around the world under the aegis of this goal improved significantly when submarines such as NR-1 found themselves more available than before, at the end of the Cold War.⁹ The same goes for Italian underwater archaeologists' access and capacities, if not for their government's globalizing political aspiration. Their attention to the existence of relics in deep waters rose following one of the massacres (*stragi*) that hit Italy because of the combination of its geographical position and somewhat ambiguous relationship to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) alliance during the Cold War. In June 1980, a DC-9 airplane of the airline *Itavia*, on its way from Bologna to Palermo, crashed into the Tyrrhenian Sea not far from the island of Ustica (for which it received its name, "*la strage d'Ustica*"). The chain of criminal, parliamentary, and civil investigations of the massacre continued until January 2013, when the Italian Court of Cassations ruled that the aircraft had crashed after being hit by a missile or colliding with another airplane, and that in any case, the massacre occurred owing to an act of war (Gaetano 2013). Yet already in 1989 the Parliamentary Commission on Terrorism had issued a statement to that effect (Coco 2015). During the search for the aircraft's wreck and clues about the flight's fate, a remotely operated underwater vehicle (ROV) surveying the seabed at a depth of 3000 meters discovered and filmed an ancient shipwreck carrying a significant cargo of amphorae. In drawing connections between such events and their accounts of the history of underwater archaeology, Italian marine cultural heritage

⁹A war which itself staged the struggle between two self-proclaimed universalist programs of promoting "the benefit of mankind."

officials seem to weave their successes in reaching the ever-deeper seabed with their own national histories of belligerently propelled technology; only that here the threat did not take the shape of an egalitarian enmity but Italian subservience to the French and American powers, under whose orders the fighter jet that would have shot the missile at the Itavia DC-9 airplane operated.

If the allusion to the *Strage d'Ustica* set the scale of patrimonialization at the national level, other elements in the story foregrounded the subnational scale and preferred the Sicilian perspective over its Italian counterpart. This perspective, which made use of a regional scale of Mediterraneanism, distinguished between the national and the subnational, and offered a Sicilian alternative to the Italian control over the process. This alternative comes out of the Sicilian account of the satyr's restoration. If all Italian actors seemed to have shown a united national pride in trying to protect their relics from foreign looters (Conti 1998), the Sicilians among them still claimed that a relic found by a Sicilian trawler and brought to its Sicilian home port should be restored by Sicilian experts and housed in the island. The question of the satyr's final home has followed the statue ever since it landed ashore. Yet it probably found its most articulate expression during the discussion over which institute should conduct the restoration procedures. If some Sicilian experts hoped to keep the operation on the island, the work ended at the hands of the national Central Institute of Restoration in Rome (Istituto Centrale di Restauro, nowadays the Istituto Superiore per la Conservazione ed il Restauro). The elegy that one archaeologist dedicated to this decision, which I summarize here, can clarify the tensions between the national and the sub-national scales of identity and prestige:

Given the nobility of [the relic's] rank, the highest officeholders of the State and the Sicilian Region in the field of cultural heritage rushed to its bedside. Another consequence of the relic's importance was that one of the best "hospitals" in Italy and in the world was immediately chosen for [the relic], even if not without controversies [...] Shortly after its discovery, the statue followed the route of many Sicilians who leave Sicily to find hospitals in the north [...] Whatever motivated the choice at the basis of the emigration of the Satyr, I regret to admit that "Sicilian culture" did not demonstrate its best in abdicating to others the direction of the operation of restoration, which, I'm convinced now as I was then, we neither could have nor should have delegated to any other person. (Tusa 2004: 46)

In this subnational calculus, Sicily had a chance to prove that it was more Mediterranean than Italy, just as much as Italy is more Mediterranean than the United States. The Mediterraneanist political imaginary charted political relations—including historical continuities, present identities, and claims to cultural patrimony—from the center of the sea. But to materialize the claims that such an imaginary offered, Sicilian actors needed to maintain control of the tangible artefacts of such continuities and identities (Cuno 2008). In failing to do so, they also lost a chance to assert their Mediterraneanist primacy over Italy.

THE PREVIOUS LIVES OF THE SATYR

The specific Mediterraneanist shape of the satyr's story involved a conflictual setup on subnational, national, and transnational scales not only during the statue's journey from the seabed to the surface, but also in the debates about the satyr's trajectory to the bottom of the sea. The many questions that the archaeological investigations have opened shed light on the echoes and reverberations between the various epochs in the satyr's life as well as between the satyr's story and Mediterraneanist tales on wider historical and geographical scales.

The only undisputed fact about the statue is that it was a part of the load of a boat that capsized between Pantelleria and Cap Bon. The statue depicts a male character in mid-leap, with his head thrown back, his back arched, and his hair swinging, continuing the swirling movement of his neck and head. Initially, some experts suspected that the statue depicted the Aeolus, the god of winds in Greek mythology (Viviano 1998). Later it was established that the statue depicts a dancing satyr. Some archaeologists have argued that the statue was the figurehead of a ship, judging the statue a good classicist piece of art rather than a masterpiece. Yet several key archaeologists have debated this view, arguing instead that the statue would have belonged to a Dionysian cycle, probably accompanied by a maenad in the swirling ecstatic dance (Moreno 1998). This later view—that the statue depicts a unique form of movement—serves the wider argument about the satyr's importance. If it is a piece of classic art, its context remains mainly Greek, even if transmarine. The satyr's artistic characteristics would in this case be divorced from the statue's ancient route across the Mediterranean. This view is held, for example, by the leading French archaeologists and classicists (*La Repubblica* 2007).

If, on the contrary, the satyr represents the unique specimen of an innovative kind of sculpture that dates to the first moments of the Hellenistic period, then its presence at the bottom of the sea may index the historical relationship between Greek and Roman society, art, and mobility. This version would give the statue (and, by association, its finders and keepers) an ancient Mediterraneanist pedigree: the satyr would be "Mediterranean" not only because it was found in the middle of the sea, but also because the early Hellenistic version would make the statue and its trajectory signify a recognizable Mediterranean constellation in ancient times. Assuming that this was indeed a masterpiece from the middle of the fourth century BCE, it would have travelled along the routes of the cross-Mediterranean traffic in art, which dates to the second century BCE. Through this traffic, which multiplied with Roman expansion across the Mediterranean, Romans "copied," "looted," and "robbed" the works of Greek artists. In this view of the mobility of Hellenistic works of art across the Roman Mediterranean, the satyr would have been about 200 years old when it boarded the ship with which it reached the seabed. And assuming that the statue was two centuries old when it reached the seabed, the same view concludes that it probably travelled onboard a vessel belonging to a scrap merchant, who traveled around the Mediterranean in search of bronze pieces of different shape and nature, and who also collected precious objects such as the satyr.

The satyr's uniqueness according to this account sets up its earlier lives in an ancient world of connections and movements that mirrors the present. This version provides a composite image of a Mediterranean constellation of mobility—combining Roman expansion and looting, Greek precious artefacts that come to be subsumed in the Roman project, and objects whose value depends on their movement (licit or not, consensual or not). In this version, the satyr would be a Greek work of art that traveled the Mediterranean because it was appreciated by the rising and expanding Roman powers. In other words, the statue's form, its mobility, and the political context of that mobility condition each other (Gill and Chippindale 1993: 626). By implication, once the statue is understood through this Mediterraneanist lens, it becomes an emblem of this specific view of the Mediterranean (Broodbank 1992). In turn, this image serves as a scheme for understanding the technological, political, and cultural dimension of the present constellation—the same, very modern constellation, which conditioned the satyr's resurfacing. It is this version that the leading Sicilian maritime archaeologists have promoted, and which they

sought to spread together with the satyr in recent years (Tusa 2004: 58–62). The Sicilian archaeologists' version about the satyr's origin, path, and context of drowning ultimately served to forge an even longer continuity between the present and the Mediterranean's ancient past.

CONCLUSION

The satyr's trajectory to the seabed and back to land illuminates how contemporary forms of maritime connection and regionalist imaginaries interact to condition the current shape and image of the Mediterranean transnational constellation. More broadly, the trajectories of underwater artefacts from maritime pasts into the present reveal the similarities between the ancient and current kinds of connectivity, as well as the kinds of continuity that present actors draw—on the basis of such similarities—between the past and the present. As long as we limit our view of Mediterranean connectivity to premodern times, we would be unable to examine current connections that resemble them, as well as the kinds of continuities that actors make of these similarities. To move beyond this limitation, we need to examine not only when and how people are connected, but also how they come to see each other as related: what terms they use to inform such claims of relatedness; what roles, relationships, and obligations they promote, impose, or deny; and how they conjure up past relationships between their (proclaimed) respective past generations.

No matter how we define the switch from the premodern to the modern—the arrival of steam shipping, the nation-state order, or Europe's neglect of the Mediterranean in favor of wider colonial pursuits—the means to access past Mediterraneans rely on the technologies of mobility and connectivity that shape the present Mediterranean. Modern maritime technologies of transnational fishing and underwater surveying and operations technologies (developed mainly for Cold War submarine warfare and pipeline or cable construction) have shaped the accessibility of the central Mediterranean transnational constellation for those archaeologists who could enjoy them. They have conditioned international struggles over marine resources (Ben-Yehoyada 2012), collaborations for the transportation of energy (Hayes 2006), and the role of the Mediterranean Sea and its surrounding countries in the control over key maritime routes and scenes of potential naval warfare (Ambrosetti 2001). At the same time, these technologies have also shaped the fortunes of underwater artefacts that—once resurfaced—emblemize the cultural heritage that

Mediterranean states (potentially) share. In other words, the same technological conditions of current maritime connectedness that contribute to the similarities between past and present moments of connectedness also provide the material conditions—the resurfacing of underwater artefacts—for the projects that claim continuities on subnational, national, and regional scales. These projects transform connectedness into claims of relatedness.

When they emerge in international waters, underwater archaeological objects become emblems of Mediterraneanist cultural heritage. Because these objects lie in international waters, they decenter states' national heritage projects (Herzfeld 2014; Abu El-Haj 2001). They do so by pointing away from national territories and their consolidated histories and towards a potentially shared transnational past. At the same time, these objects enter the struggle over ownership and representation among various heritage projects, which attempt to harness the Mediterraneanist energies emanating from these objects to their national (Italian or Tunisian), subnational (Sicilian, Mazarese), or wider (European, Western, North African, Mediterranean) cultural projects. Contemporary interaction and exchange across the sea shape Mediterraneanist imaginaries, and the people—moved by these imaginaries—in turn and remake the Mediterranean.

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