

The Mediterranean – The Greatest Sea

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*"The grand object ... is to see the shores of the Mediterranean. On those shores were four great empires ...: Egyptian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman. **Almost all religion, law, and art ... come from those shores.**"*- Dr. Samuel Johnson

- My topic is the waters and Islands of the Mediterranean: The Greatest Sea
- My goal is to provide an appreciation of this Greatest Sea and have time for some questions

Great size & significance



- Greatest sea in size – 2,500 by 500 miles
- Area of million sq. mi. at depth of 1 mile
- Shores connect 3 continents and 22 countries
- 250 million population in coastal regions
- 3,300 islands – over 12 million people
- 320 million tourists – 1/3 of global

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The Mediterranean

- Greatest sea in size – 2,500 by 500 miles
- Area of million square miles – size of Argentina
- Shores connect 3 continents and 22 countries
- 250 million population in coastal regions
- 3,300 islands – largest 190 has 12 million people & 40,000 sq. mi. area – size of Switzerland
- 320 million tourists in region
- Travel & tourism is 10 to 20% of GDP of major European countries on borders

Gibraltar – Ocean Entrance



- 8-mile wide choke point
- 1/2 world's sea trade
- Once "Pillars of Hercules" - edge of known world
- UK, but Spain claims
- WW II British Navy control
- Now tourism & shipping services

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Gibraltar choke point

- Population of 32,000 and area of 2.6 sq. mi., one of world's most densely populated territories
- Gibraltar Strait - only 8 miles wide, a naval choke point
- Half world's seaborne trade passes through the strait
- "The Rock" – has labyrinth inside of secret roads and tunnels and views of famous monkeys
- Known as Pillars of Hercules – edge of Mediterranean and known world
- Strategically important for shipping
- Ceded to Great Britain by Spain in the 1713, but contested as Spain still claims sovereignty
- Top of Rock a British military installation and off-limits
- WW II important base for the Royal Navy as it controlled the entrance and exit to the Mediterranean Sea,
- Economy based on tourism, online gambling, financial services and ship refueling

Mediterranean's significance:
Source of western culture & religion

- **"Middle of earth":** Bounded by Europe, Africa and Asia. Cradle of cultures, highway for trade and cultural exchange, and battleground of empires
- **Linkage:** For 5,000 years central link in spread of civilization, religion, political alliances and conflicts, and commerce
- **Today:** Still major link for cultures, commerce and tourism

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Mediterranean's significance

- **Source of western culture & religion:** *"The grand object ... is to see the shores of the Mediterranean. On those shores were four great empires of the world: Egyptian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman. Almost all religion, law, and art ... come from those shores."*-Dr. Samuel Johnson
- **Size & location:** "Middle sea" - bounded by Europe on north, Africa on south, and Asia on east. Cradle of cultures, highway for trade and cultural exchange, and battleground of empires
- **Growth of civilization:** For 5,000 years central link in spread of civilization, religion, political alliances and conflicts, and commerce
- **Today:** Roiled by immigrants, Middle East unrest, Russian aggression

Not just a sea but "Vast, complex expanse"



- French Historian Fernand Braudel wrote:
- No single Mediterranean Sea but a "vast, complex expanse"
- Life is conducted on the Mediterranean: people travel, fish, fight wars, and drown
- The sea interacts with the plains and islands
- Can't be understood independently from what is exterior to it

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No single Mediterranean Sea but a "vast, complex expanse"

- Life is conducted on the Mediterranean: people travel, fish, fight wars, and drown
- The sea articulates with the plains and islands
- Mediterranean cannot be understood independently from what is exterior to it.
- Views of French Historian Fernand Braudel (1902-85) one of the greatest of the modern historians, who wrote the renown book *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, 1949

Mediterranean's famous ancient cultures & personalities

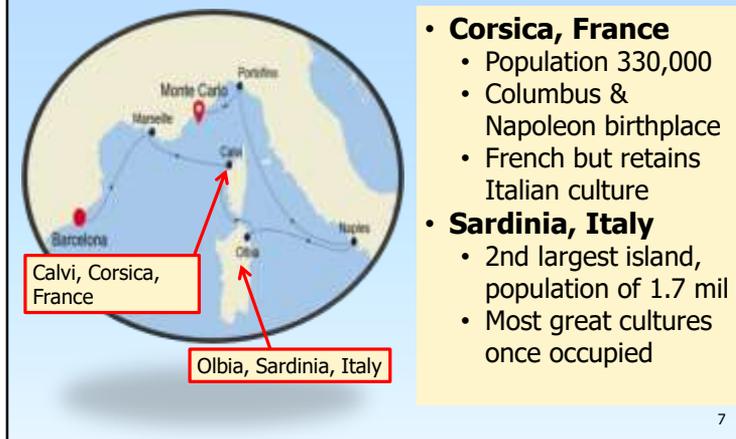
- **Cultures:** Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Phoenician, Hebrew, Carthaginian, Greek, Persian, Etruscan, Iberian, Roman, Byzantine, Arab, Ottoman, Christian, Islamic ...
- **Personalities** – Julius Caesar, Cleopatra, Charlemagne, Michelangelo, Leonardo Da Vinci, Aristotle, Galileo, Alexander the Great, Jesus, Muhammad, Dante, Medici's, Thomas Aquinas, Herodotus, Homer, Pericles ...

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Mediterranean's famous cultures, heroes, and legacies

- **Early cultures:** Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Canaanite, Phoenician, Hebrew, Carthaginian, Greek, Persian, Thracian, Etruscan, Iberian, Roman, Byzantine, Bulgarian, Arab, Ottoman, Christian and Islamic cultures.
- **People** – Julius Caesar, Cleopatra, Charlemagne, Michelangelo, Leonardo Da Vinci, Aristotle, Galileo, Alexander the Great, Jesus, Muhammad, the Pope, Dante, the Medici's, Thomas Aquinas, Herodotus, Homer, Pericles, Solon ...

Sardinia & Corsica – Once occupied by most great Mediterranean cultures



• **Corsica, France**

- Population 330,000
- Columbus & Napoleon birthplace
- French but retains Italian culture

• **Sardinia, Italy**

- 2nd largest island, population of 1.7 mil
- Most great cultures once occupied

Italian Sardinia & French Corsica – Examples of to evolving Mediterranean

• **France's Corsica Island**

- Ruled by Genoa 1284 to 1755 as Italian-speaking independent republic
- Ceded by to France part of a pledge for debts and conquered in 1769.
- Calvi, Corsica - small town where Christopher Columbus came from Calvi when was in Genoese Empire.
- Speaking of Columbus, they say that he was the first economist. When he left to discover America, he didn't know where he was going; when he got there he didn't know where he was, and it was all done on a government grant.
- Calvi also the battle which cost British Admiral Nelson his eye
- Napoleon Bonaparte museum in Ajaccio, where he was born.
- Though French Island, retains Italian cultural elements among its population of 330,000.

• **Italy's Sardinia Island**

- 2nd largest Island in Mediterranean with population of 1.7 mil.; settled since pre-history with stone fortress of ancient Nuragic civilization
- Long history of evolving civilizations – Nuraghic, Phoenicians, Greeks, Carthaginians, Roman, Vandals, Byzantine, Italian
- Olbia – seaport town northeastern Sardinia city of 60,000
- San Simplicio Catholic Basilica – Built of granite in 11th Century

Landmarks Mediterranean civilizations



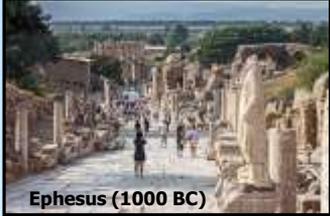
Pyramids of Giza (2500 BC)



Acropolis, Athens (500 AD)



Coliseum of Rome (70-80 AD)



Ephesus (1000 BC)

Also cities: Alexandria, Venice, Florence, Naples,
Jerusalem, Marseille, Barcelona, Pompeii...

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Landmarks Mediterranean civilizations

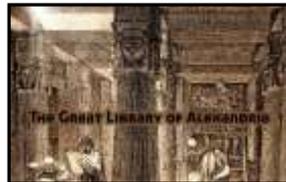
- **Acropolis of Athens** - ancient citadel who Pericles (495–429 BC) coordinated the construction of the site's most important present remains
- **Egyptian pyramids** - at [Giza](#), near [Cairo](#) - among the largest structures ever built.
- **The Coliseum of Rome** seated 80,000 and used for gladiatorial contests and public spectacles such as mock sea battles, animal hunts, executions
- **Ephesus in Turkey** built in 10th century, famed for Temple of Artemis and Library of Celsus , and site of several Christian Councils
- Other noted sites include: Alexandria, Constantinople, Venice, Florence, Sicily, Milan, Carthage, Jerusalem, Barcelona, Pompeii ...

But Mediterranean's legacy is much more than places and personalities



Complex institutions:

Christianity, Islam, alphabet, engineering, finance, wine, philosophy, science, law, universities ...



Think beyond structures to circumstances

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But Civilizations Are More Than Architecture or Seas

- In his book, Niall Ferguson, *Civilization: The West and the Rest*, Allen Lane, 2011, pages 1-3 stresses, civilizations are not just art and architecture or contents of a few first-rate art galleries
- But highly complex human organizations of economic, social and political institutions
- Success is measured not just in its aesthetic achievements but in quality of life of its citizens.
- A city's laws are as important as its walls
- Its constitution and customs as important as its palaces
- A good reminder to us travelers that we need to marvel not only the tangible structures we see, but the people and circumstances that created them

Religion's role in Med. progress

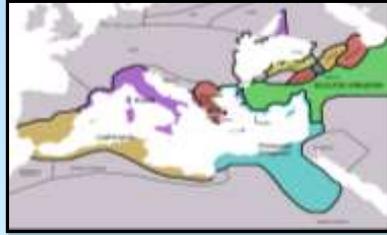


- **Ambivalent**
 - Founded universities, yet burned scientists
 - Supported printing, yet burned books
 - Preached equality yet accepted slavery
 - Accompanied merchants, yet condemned lending
- **Inadvertent**
 - Monotheism - more amenable to science
 - Moderated values and beliefs
 - Reshaped legal systems and thought
 - Inadvertently encouraged trade (e.g. Crusades)

Spread of Religions' ambivalent role

- Maps trace spread of Christianity and Islam around Mediterranean
- But religion has had ambivalent role in progress and prosperity
- Founded earliest universities, yet burned scientists at stake
- Religious architecture and objects (e.g. churches & bells) spurred advance of engineering, metallurgy and printing, yet squandered and monopolized economic activity
- Reformation reduced corruption of church but also led to book burning and limiting printing presses
- Church preached equality yet accepted slavery and owned slaves
- Missionaries spread global contact and merchants spread religion, yet religion condemned lending and love of money
- Had big impact: "Economic change ... depends ... on what people believe...." Mokyr, *The Enlightened Economy*, p 1

History of Mediterranean region crucial to understanding origins and development of many modern societies



- Etruscans (1000 BC) had sophisticated lives
- Phoenicians (800 BC) spread across Mediterranean
- Greece under Alexander Hellenized region by 332 BC
- Next 400 years, Rome controlled Med

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History of Mediterranean region crucial to understanding origins and development of many modern societies

- The Etruscans-in Western Italy by 1000 BC when Rome was a village and developed a sophisticated way of life and control
- Phoenicians/Carthaginians-originated in Lebanon and spread to Carthage in 800 BC with settlements in Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, southern Spain, and Cyprus and fought 3 Punic Wars with the Romans
- Greek city-states created throughout the region. Were Threatened by Persia in 480 BC but prevailed.
- Greek city-states were rife with conflict until Alexander Hellenized the region, defeated the Persians in 332 BC and swept from Egypt to India
- Alexander died and Hellenic Empire was divided with the Ptolemies ruling Egypt from 323-31 BC
- Romans conquered and Romanized the Hellenic empire
- For the next 400 years, the Roman Empire completely controlled the Mediterranean Sea and virtually all its coastal regions from Gibraltar to the Levant.

The map, titled "Hellenistic Civilization", illustrates the geographical reach of Greek culture during the Hellenistic period. A red outline traces the path of Alexander the Great's conquests, starting from the Aegean region, through the Middle East, and extending as far east as the Indian subcontinent. Major cities like Athens, Alexandria, and Antioch are marked. A legend in the bottom-left corner identifies symbols for the "Area of Greek settlement", "Major cities", and "Major cities". The word "AFRICA" is visible at the bottom of the map.

- Hellenistic Civilization peaked at death of Alexander (323BC)
- Greek civilization encompassed all our cruise and much more
- Athens excellence ended by Roman conquest

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Hellenistic period or Hellenistic civilization

- Period of between the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC and the emergence of ancient Rome battle of Actium in 31 BC and conquest of Ptolemaic Egypt in 30 BC
- Greek cultural influence and power was at its peak
- After Alexander the Great, Hellenistic kingdoms established and Greek culture and language exported to them
- Hellenistic culture was a fusion of the Ancient Greek world with that of Near East and Asia
- Hellenistic period ended between the conquest of Greece by Rome in 146 BC and Constantine's move to Constantinople in 330 AD

Venus de Milo, Louvre, one of the most famous products of Hellenistic art
(wikipedia.org/wiki/Venus_de_Milo)

- Famous ancient Greek statue created around 100 BC of Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love and beauty (Venus to the Romans)
- Discovered in 1820 by peasant on the island of Milos in the Aegean, then in Ottoman Empire
- A French naval officer recognized its significance and went to Constantinople and arranged the purchase with French ambassador
- In the meantime, the peasant was pressured into selling it to a translator for Sultan Mahmud II
- French arrived just as the statue was being loaded aboard a ship bound for Constantinople and seized the statue. The Sultan had the translator executed

"Our Sea" – Roman Lake for 400 years



The sea - route for merchants & travelers,
facilitating trade and cultural exchange

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"Our Sea" – the Roman Lake

- For 400 years, the Roman Empire completely controlled Mediterranean Sea – empire surrounded the sea
- The sea was an important route for merchants and travelers of ancient times, facilitating trade and cultural exchange between peoples of the region.

Ottoman dominant until Europe in 1571 regained control



- Crusades led to flourishing trade
- 1453 Ottoman's conquered Byzantine Empire
- Ottomans controlled much of Med in 16th c.
- Europe's win at Lepanto (1571) checked Ottomans

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History of Mediterranean region crucial to understanding origins and development of many modern societies

- Crusades led to flourishing of trade
- Ottoman power based in Anatolia continued to grow, and in 1453 extinguished the Byzantine Empire with the Conquest of Constantinople.
- Ottomans gained control of much of the sea in the 16th century and maintained naval bases in southern France (1543–1544), Algeria and Tunisia.
- As naval prowess of Europe increased, at Battle of Lepanto (1571) checked the power Ottomans

Why success?



Advantages

- Peninsular- sea access
- Lucky latitudes – favorable climate
- East-West orientation –plant transfer
- Cheap energy
- Many natural borders – smaller states

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Why success of Mediterranean?

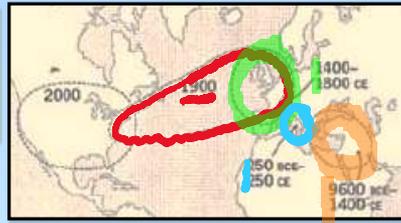
Advantages

- **Peninsular:** coastline and rivers for cheaper transport and seafood
- **Lucky latitudes:** temperate climate favorable for farming and living
- **East-West orientation:** easier adaptation of plants and animals per Jared Diamond
- **Cheap energy:** from forests, coal, wind and water
- **Many natural borders:** encouraged political communities of varying sizes & competition of ideas, people, commerce

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Why no longer economic center of earth?



- 16th c. - ocean cheaper than Silk Roads
- 17th c. - Dutch became economic leader
- 18th c. - British Industrial Revolution
- 19th c. - Suez Canal aided North Atlantic trade
- 20th c. North Atlantic became economic center

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Europe's economic center shifted away from Mediterranean

- 15th & 16th c. ocean cheaper than Silk Roads
- 17th c. Dutch became economic leader
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- 20th c. North Atlantic became economic center

Challenging past century

- 1914-18: World War I
- 1923: Ottoman Empire dissolved
- 1939-45: World War II
- 1947-89: Cold War
- 1973: Arab-Israel war
- 1979: Iranian Revolution
- 1989: Collapse of Soviet Union
- 1990: Gulf War
- 2002: Iraq War
- 2008: Euro crises
- 2015: Migrant crisis

Migrant Crisis

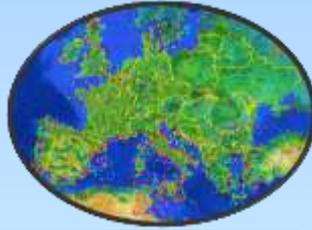


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Challenging past century

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Mediterranean still strategic



- Farming - olives, oranges and world's top wine-growing
- 1/3 world's merchant shipping
- 1/3 of international tourists
- Discovery of natural gas and oil - may ease Europe's energy dependence on Russia
- Cusp of clash of civilizations

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Mediterranean still strategic

- Culturally diverse sea region: pleasant climate, beautiful coastline, rich history and various cultures
- Farming important: olives, oranges and world's most important wine-growing region
- Busy shipping routes: 220,000 merchant vessels - one third of world's merchant shipping.
- Popular tourist destination: 1/3 of international tourists
- Discovery of natural gas and oil: causing a conflicts but may ease Europe's energy dependence on Russia
- Discoveries of natural gas reserves in the Mediterranean Sea around Egypt, Cyprus, Israel and Greece are shaking up Europe's energy politics. Traditionally, Russia has been Europe's main supplier of gas, giving it [significant influence over Europe](#). But this influence is under threat from various gas discoveries in the eastern Mediterranean and a tussle is taking place to control the region's resources.
- Cusp of clash of civilizations

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Mediterranean's environmental issues

- Climate change - raise sea level and flood Venice and others
- Endangered species - Sea turtles
- Spills of oils from tankers
- Overfishing - 60% species in danger
- Fortunately, beginning greater protection and environmentally friendly cruise lines

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Mediterranean's environmental issues

- Climate change could raise the sea level of the Mediterranean and flood Venice
- Pollution from sewage dumped
- Endangered species - Sea turtles
- Leakage and spills of oils from tankers
- Overfishing - 60% fish species in danger
- Fortunately, beginning greater protection
- Thankfully, cruise lines are now becoming quite environmentally friendly

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Future of Mediterranean? **Crucial to future of all of us**

- **Challenges:** Russia, Crimea, environmental, immigration, Middle East, euro crisis, ...
- But efforts to promote Union of Mediterranean
 - 28 EU + 15 Med
- Role go from cradle & crucible to conciliator?



Union of Mediterranean

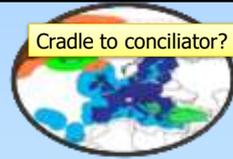
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Future of Mediterranean?

- Cusp of clash of civilizations
- EU challenges – immigration, euro crisis, Brexit, Russia...
- But efforts to promote Union of Mediterranean
 - 43 member states - 28 EU and 15 Mediterranean partner countries from North Africa, Western Asia and Southern Europe.
 - Founded in 2008 to reinforce Euro-Mediterranean Partnership of 1995
 - Aims to promote stability and integration across the Mediterranean and support development and ensure stability in the region

Source: Union for the Mediterranean, Wikipedia

Mediterranean: **Summary & Conclusions**



- Cradle & crucible - empires rose, fell & fought
- Origin & long center of western culture
- But center moved Northeast after Discoveries & Industrial Revolution
- Still world's largest and busiest sea
- New role in 21st century? Bridging East-West

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The Mediterranean – Summary & Conclusions

- Cradle and crucible where empires rose, fell and fought
- Origin, source and once center of western culture
- But power moved northwest after Age of Discovery and Industrial Revolution
- Still world's largest and busiest sea
- A new role in 21st century?
 - From a cradle & crucible to conciliator of civilizations – bridging East-West & North-South divides (but Brexit)

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