

Mediterranean democracy, Year 1

Paris, 18 September 2012

ENS, rue d'Ulm, Salle des Résistants

Present (indicating areas of main interest): Benoît Agnes *pm only* (UK France), Sylvie Aprile (French exiles), Marc Aymes (Ottomans), Olivier Bouquet (Ottomans), Grégoire Bron (Portugal), Deborah Cohen (France), Nicholas Delalande *am only* (France), Véronique Hébrard (Lat Am, Venezuela), Marion Leclaire *am only* (UK), Georges Lomné (Lat Am, Colombia), Mark Mazower *pm only* (Greece), Jeanne Moisand *am only* (Spain), Gilles Pécout *am only* (Mediterranean, Italy), Natalie Richard (France), Clément Thibaud (Lat Am, Venezuela), Geneviève Verdo (Lat Am, Argentina), and Sophie Wahnich (France).

And Maurizio Isabella, Joanna Innes, Mark Philp, Eduardo Posada Carbo

Apologies, or expressed interest but didn't appear: Fabrice Bensimon, Bertrand Binoche, Jordi Canal, Christophe Charle, Laurent Colantonio, Emmanuel Fureix, Florent Guenard, Francois Jarrige, Fabrice Jesné, Maxime Kaci, Wolfgang Kaiser, Anna Karla, Gilles Malandain, Pierre-Yves Manchon, Virginie Martin, Stephane Michonneau, Philippe Minard, Federica Morelli, J. Roca-Vernet, Simon Sarlin, Julien Vincent, Geerten Waling.

FIRST SESSION: THE PROJECT

Mark Philp outlined how the previous, North Atlantic (US, France, GB, Ireland) phase of the project had been addressed; a book was now in press. The project had focussed on the period over which 'democracy' was reconceptualised as a modern phenomenon. This was partly a matter of changes in the way 'democracy' and cognate terms were applied, partly a matter of changes in the world to which they applied. Language and practice interacted in complex ways. Though there were certain broad common trends, national experiences also differed.

Joanna Innes explained that funding had now been obtained to underpin the next phase of the project, which would focus on Southern Europe and the Mediterranean, above all on Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece, where a series of meetings would be held, though the broader Mediterranean context was also of interest; as were Latin America, insofar as it was vitally connected with Spain and Portugal especially, and 'northern powers', insofar as they interacted with and impinged upon the region (UK, France, Austria, Russia). The design of the next phase reflected a conclusion drawn from the first phase: that a diffusionist model is not appropriate; different places invented modern democracy in their own way (though certainly in interaction with other countries and their experiences). She noted that the definition of 'place' in this context was not rigid; in the first phase of the project, Ireland had been distinguished from Britain, though they shared a common national government, because Irish political culture had developed in such distinctive ways. Though the hypothesis was that patterns would differ from place to place, it was also hypothesised that the region shared certain common experiences. The chronology looked different. In the north Atlantic, democracy came to prominence in two waves, in the 1790s and 1830s-40s. On the whole, in the south, the rise to prominence of the idea of democracy came later (though in parts of Italy it was embraced in the 1790s with more enthusiasm than in France). The 1820s saw more dramatic turbulence in the south. The 1850s were perhaps more notable as a period of tension and change. There were distinctive southern reference points, eg the 1812 Spanish constitution. In this period, as in the twenty-first century, southern European polities found

themselves under the sway of northern powers; questions of home rule and popular rule sometimes interacted.

The purpose of the current session was to open discussion of these hypotheses; to arouse the interest of those attending in the project, and to further the construction of the academic network that would be crucial to its development. Funding was available to move some of those interested in the project around from place to place; those interested in attending sessions elsewhere were encouraged to inform the project organisers of their interest.

Discussion:

Deborah Cohen asked whether divisions of opinion within countries would be recognised. *Certainly*

Genevieve Verdo asked how it could be determined which practices were relevant. *Broadly, the intention was to draw the net widely: all phenomena described at some point in the period as democratic were potentially of interest, even before they were so described.*

Sophie Wahnich suggested that an anti-diffusionist approach was untenable: transfers and circulations of ideas were crucial. Eg there was much translation of works between cultures. *This was accepted. Certainly there was much interaction – or else there would be little merit in a regional approach. What was denied was the modern democracy was invented in one place and spread outwards. But in reinventing democracy for themselves, people in different places were often influenced by what they believed about what had happened and was happening elsewhere. However, they used what they believed in their own ways for their own purposes. In the case of translation, the question of why things were translated at particular times, and how they were understood was thus significant.*

Clement Thibaud suggested that restricting attention to the region risked not only concealing influences but also restricting opportunities for illuminating comparison. He also asked if it was really appropriate to stress nations as units, when empires were of continuing importance – in the Iberian world but also in relation to the Ottomans, and British, French and Russian ambitions in the Mediterranean. *It was stressed that a focus on the region was not intended to preclude reference to anywhere beyond the region, for comparative or other purposes. His point about empires was very well taken: the presentation of the project had underplayed that. In fact, the Mediterranean was, as he suggested, a space in which competing visions of empire played out in this period, and that was an important element of N-S links; moreover, the continuing vitality of empire as a political form diversified and complicated the ways in which people could imagine belonging.*

Nicholas Delalande: Asked if the practices to be considered included eg petitioning, which was not new in this period, but remained important as a form of interaction between people and government. *Indeed, much of what came to be conceptualised as democratic practice, including representation itself and petitioning, had a long history in which they were not conceived of as democratic; attempts to institute democracy often involved the appropriation and redescription of existing forms, though perhaps at the same time their reworking. More generally, the period with which the project was concerned saw developments in state forms, which provided one context in which it was necessary to re-imagine democracy. This could involve the establishment of new local agencies of the state, displacing older participatory forms; in this context, implementing modern democracy might mean developing new forms of participation, eg in the form of an elected council. Traditional and modern democratic forms could in this context clash – as seemed to have happened eg in Switzerland; perhaps Carlism in Spain could be thought of partly in these terms.*

Deborah Cohen suggested, in relation to the complexities of ‘influence’, that even ideas that appeared to have been defeated in their own time could survive as memories and have subsequent effect. Thus Buonarroti’s account of Babeuf’s conspiracy was subsequently influential, representing both an French and an Italian influence on events elsewhere. *This was agreed – and the case of Buonarroti was certainly important. In Britain, the English version of his text was important to Chartist reimagining of ‘the Terror’ as a democratic phase of the revolution.*

SECOND SESSION: THE REGION

Maurizio noted that some themes common to the region had already been identified. Thus:

- Important for many discussions of democracy was the ancient world – not just Greece, but Rome (often more influential until the nineteenth century, since not all the Greek texts were available). Although people derived a lot of negative images of the people they also took a lot of interest in demagoguery and leadership. Ancient models also influenced discussions of mixed government, and its relation to societal structure – which encourages the development of democracy and aristocracy as antonyms.

He would add a few further suggestions.

- The region saw high levels of civil conflict in the post-Napoleonic period. In this context, democracy was not uncommonly linked with armed struggle
- There was a great deal of interest in the devising of constitutions, and those involved in these debates often looked across state boundaries, notably to the 1812 Spanish constitution, which was shaped in part by French example but also had indigeneous elements
- 1820 was a crucial moment for the region (in which the 1812 constitution assumed especial importance)
- Volunteers travelled throughout the region, to aid one another’s struggles (they also came from outside the region, esp northern Europe, and went outside the region, eg to Lat Am). They sometimes fought for liberalism or democracy, but sometimes against them.
- The region could not be effectively studied without attention too to extra-regional developments, eg in Latin America. This period saw divergence between southern Europe and Latin America (as Spanish and Portuguese empires fragmented), yet cultural ties remained very important; there was continuing cross-fertilisation.
- Spanish America continued among other things to function as part of a Spanish intellectual world. The Neapolitan enlightenment had influenced Spain and Spanish America in the late eighteenth century. Key thinkers of the Neapolitan enlightenment, such as Filangieri and Genovese continued to be important within this cultural region through to at least the 1830s.
- Empires continued to dominate the region, but the period saw a shift in the balance of forces. Spanish and Portuguese empires were radically reduced; the Ottoman empire on the retreat; British, French and Russian influence were growing.
- The northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean were bound together by some common experiences, eg the Napoleonic invasion brought the French revolution to bear on Egypt. North African intellectuals may have developed from this experience their own ideas about sovereignty, and perhaps even democracy.

- New ideas about the Mediterranean itself were put on the table. French intellectuals (eg Saint Simon) played an important role in conceptualising the Mediterranean as a new civilisational space, on the brink of regeneration, but that idea was also taken up eg by Italian patriots.

Joanna added:

- Background of socio-economic links, provided by movement of peoples and goods
- Role of lawyers as intermediaries worth considering: constitutional thinking was probably professionally embodied in legal thought and practice. The role of overseas legal education might be of interest.
- One widely influential political philosophy seems to have been the French Doctrinaires' version of liberalism. One thing that made 1830s-40s democracy different from its 1790s precursor was that it was now defined against liberalism.

Maurizio agreed, and expanded on the last point. Spanish liberals called themselves Doctrinarios. These ideas were also influential in the Rio de la Plata: though they talked positively about democracy, they conceptualised it in doctrinaire terms, thus in terms of the sovereignty of reason.

Mark added: The discussion of democracy differed from classical discussions because two other elements were commonly present – ideas of popular sovereignty and the general will – so that the problem was conceived in terms of how they might be embodied in democratic institutions. Moreover, ideas of the modern and modernity become closely tied to ideas of democracy – partly as a way of distancing from the ancient world, partly as a way of recognising something new about democracy (the link to representation). It was often supposed that democracy represented a new social phenomenon, a basic egalitarianism within the political system. This link became particularly powerful from the 1830s.

Discussion:

George Lomné asked where Switzerland fitted: was it part of the region? Long regarded as particularly democratic. Sismondi certainly greatly influenced thinking about Italy. *It was of decreasing significance as a model in this period: Italian liberals regarded the traditional Swiss form of democracy as hopelessly ill-fitted to modern circumstances.*

Jeanne Moisand asked about the chronological limits of the project. The later nineteenth-century saw important changes in the region, associated eg with the Suez canal [opened 1869].

Marc Aymes also questioned the chronology. Focussing pre-Suez meant focussing on a period when not only was the Mediterranean region presented by historians as marginal, but the eastern Mediterranean was marginal to the margin. The project threatened to replicate this, notably by seeing the Mediterranean regions as latecomers to democracy (even if as engaging with democracy earlier than generally allowed). It would be better to explore simultaneous developments. *The intention was precisely not to suggest that there was a single model started in one place, on which others then converged. Chronologies might differ, but equally, each place was conceived as having charted its own course. Though diverse things might be going on within the same place. Thus eg European migrants to North African cities might draw on their own cultural heritage in negotiating the terms of their collective life with local rulers – but again, not simply exporting an existing model, but improvising in their own particular context.*

Challenged to propose his own preferred conceptual framework, **Marc Aymes** said this pursuit of a firmly established framework was precisely part of the problem, as it accounted

for the long-lasting good fortune of multiple "paradigms" having little (if anything) to do with on-the-ground research. Presently a major difficulty is that with respect to the abundant source material, scholars remain relatively few in numbers. The linguistic and philological intricacy of the Ottoman world makes it hard to approach the connections, concomitances, and interdependencies in which (post-) Ottoman spaces may be considered an integral part. Hence the argument of the ongoing "Transfaire" research programme that Aymes currently conducts ([http://www.agence-nationale-recherche.fr/projet-anr/?tx_lwmsuivibilan_pi2\[CODE\]=ANR-12-GLOB-0003](http://www.agence-nationale-recherche.fr/projet-anr/?tx_lwmsuivibilan_pi2[CODE]=ANR-12-GLOB-0003)): instead of employing the notion of "transfer", which assumes that there are elements which are allegedly "specific" to each of the regions concerned, one may focus on modalities of "trans-action" (Fr. *transfaire*), thus highlighting processes of translation and co-production of tools and techniques out of which politics is made.

Olivier Bouquet suggested that a further complication was that the Ottoman territory was not wholly Mediterranean in orientation, and indeed decreasingly so: politically, the Ottomans increasingly projected themselves towards Russia. Some historians [e.g. P. Horden and N. Purcell, M. Herzfeld, W.V. Harris, J.H. Hexter, C. Heywood, H. Kellner] have questioned the coherence of Braudelian space. He however welcomed that the reconceptualisation of the problem, away from a story about the emergence of democratic institutions. He saw more scope to bring Ottoman practice into a common story if it was possible to take an interest in practices such as petitioning, and framing ideas such as regeneration. Some of those who had advisory roles in Ottoman governments had experience in other contexts, which shaped their thinking. In this context there was growing interest in the idea of developing a formal constitution for Ottoman rule. The Tunisian constitution of 1861 was the first constitution promulgated in an Islamic country (followed by the Ottoman constitution of 1879). It has been argued that both amounted to an effort by Ottoman elites to save a regime which suited them, but this risks understating the extent of rethinking. Particularly interesting in this context was the emergence, in the 1850s and 60s, or an interest in the concept of a 'general interest', the target of a 'popular will', instead of traditional more caste-based thinking.

Marc Aymes emphasised that nonetheless this new thinking was confined to literate elites.

AFTERNOON

THIRD SESSION: MULTIPLE STORIES

Joanna introduced the session, while stressing her considerable ignorance, and the strictly provisional character of all her remarks. She identified differences that stemmed both from different forms of experience within the period, and from longer-running traditions. To illustrate differences stemming from experiences within the period: within Italy, there was significant engagement with democracy as an ideal during the 1790s; much less so in Spain and Portugal. The anti-French character of Spanish patriotic mobilisation encouraged its characterisation in terms of indigeneous traditions and ideals, even if there were e.g. points of similarity between the Spanish constitution of 1812 and 1795 French constitution. In terms of longer-standing political traditions: in Spain, democratic ideals, once they were professed (as it seems they were by some during the triennio, 1820-3), were professed within a monarchical framework; in Italy, they had much stronger affiliations with republicanism, and Italian experience during both the 1790s and 1840s reinforced that. Portugal and Greece no doubt represented yet other variations on these themes.

Mark Mazower outlined what struck him about Greek patterns, while stressing that he was not a specialist in this period. During what was retrospectively termed the war of independence, democracy was not identified as an ideal; the key term was rather ‘freedom’. After a brief republican experiment, a monarchy was established. A national assembly was consistently regarded as a vital component of the apparatus of government. The social context was important: most peasants were illiterate, and merchants only marginally literate; most people therefore had little contact with western literary cultures. Foreign volunteers projected European notions on to the Greek context, but this produced a trail of misunderstandings between the 1820s and 1840s. From the 1840s, however, there was more convergence, as modern European ideas were absorbed into and reworked within a Greek cultural context. The revolution of 1843, involving demands for the establishment of a constitution, revolved around concerns about the powers of the parliament in relation to those of the monarchy. Conceptualising the political problem in these terms involved inserting Greece within broader European struggles. In the 1860s and 70s there was much discussion of political ideas, resulting in an 1864 constitution which defined Greece as a ‘crowned democracy’. Democracy is potentially an ambiguous term in a Greek context: it can function as a synonym for republic, and was used in that way in the 1820s. In response to a question, he said that although universal male suffrage was instituted early, he did not think this practice was necessarily conceived as ‘democratic’, though the idea of the regime resting on the sovereignty of the people was certainly fundamental from the 1820s onwards.

Maurizio suggested that it was important in general to look not just for ‘democracies’ but also for polities described adjectivally as democratic: in Italy in 1848 there was much talk of democratic republics, though there were also Italian democrats, notably in Tuscany, who aimed to establish a democratic monarchy. He also stressed that of course there was no ‘Italy’ in this period, and traditions differed from state to state: in Piedmont no one seriously challenged the hold of the monarchy. He also suggested that in the Italian case liberalism and democracy could not easily be disentangled.

Gregoire Bron outlined the Portuguese case as he saw it. Here democracy and republicanism were strongly associated, to the disadvantage of democracy, which was not thought to be compatible with monarchy. The Portuguese triennio did not see ‘democracy’ endorsed. Moreover, the concept of popular sovereignty was also not accepted. Instead, sovereignty was said to lie in the nation. In the 1830s, there was some interest in the development of a more popular form of monarchy. But before 1848 democracy was rarely invoked.

Geneviève Verdo in Latin America also the term democracy was also mainly used negatively.

Eduardo however argued that— judging from the draft article on Colombia for Iberconcepts that he has read – the term was used positively more often than historians have supposed. He has also identified early positive uses among Venezuelan authors such as Roscio, though certainly the positive uses became more common in the region from the 1840s.

They agreed, however, that there was a shift in language as republicans became democrats.

Sophie Wahnich suggested that negative images of democracy owed much to the triumph of the Thermidorian version of the revolution, though that did not have the same effects everywhere. In Egypt, where Robespierre’s works were translated early, he was understood as champion of racial equality.

Joanna suggested that the Restoration helped to open up space for a re-evaluation of democracy, once the alternative seemed to be a despotic alliance between monarchy and church. British newspapers in this period depicted Europe as the site of a battle between ‘democratic’ and ‘monarchical’ principles, each of which had their pros and cons.

Sophie however said that in this period liberals attempted to define the revolutionary heritage as their own.

Geneviève in turn argued that it did not take the Thermidorians to discredit the revolution: many reacted with horror to the Terror long before Thermidor.

Sophie responded that the important Thermidorian element was the association drawn between this experience and particular constitutional forms.

Clément Thibaud saw the invention of ideas of natural law and right in the eighteenth century as very important. These acquired a place in both liberal and democratic traditions. In Latin America, these tended to be elided rather than distinguished. He also suggested that in the 1840s, different visions of 'regeneration' became apparent in different parts of Latin America, depending in part on how racial issues were conceived.

Olivier Bouquet drew attention to the role of Balkan elites. In the late eighteenth century, they discovered and sought to revive interest in Greek classics. Out of this effort developed neo-Hellenism, entailing an interest in among other things democracy. These men were not republicans: they were themselves boyars, phanariots etc. But they were interested in reworking Greek political traditions.

Mark Philp drew attention to what was being done with the concept of aristocracy (a common antonym of democracy), which was reinterpreted over time. It did not necessarily mean a hereditary caste. Alongside it, new categories emerged, and other forms of social division were recognised, around which people mobilized -- especially around new languages of class and the economy. He also suggested that a discourse developed around the term 'Majority'.

Joanna agreed that indeed, 'aristocracy' was a significant partisan term in US politics in the 1830s and 40s, where it connoted the wealthy and established.

Maurizio said that historians' failure to pay attention to exactly what contemporaries had in mind when they advocated or attacked aristocracy had led to some crass interpretations, and a failure to engage with what was really at stake in some contemporary arguments.

Marc Aymes said that if aristocracy was to be considered as a social category, and not just as a word, possibilities of comparison with the Ottoman world appeared. Ottoman politics in effect rested on an aristocratic base. It could have that character in practice, whatever conception of sovereignty prevailed. Islands might provide particularly interesting sites in which to explore analogous practices. The Ionian islands eg when taken back from Napoleon existed under a form of divided sovereignty between Russians and Ottomans. The islands were described as 'united states' and as a 'republic', though it's hard to know whether the powers bestowed these names with a measure of irony. The challenge of establishing systems of rule in new terrain generally produces experimentation, which may be revealing; the region was similarly to be the site of experimentation during WW2.

Olivier Bouquet agreed that the insular phenomenon was very important. Dominant local groups might comprise administrative and mercantile elites, forming a kind of aristocracy, though not an archetypal western type. In Samos, neo-Phanariots argued for a Senate that would institutionalise their role.

Marc noted an ambiguity in the word, opening up scope for argument: did it mean government by the social elite or government by the best?

Geneviève Verdo noted that historians sometimes talk of elites when contemporaries might have thought the concept of an aristocracy appropriate, e.g. perhaps thus in the Rio de la Plata. There too there was a demand for a Senate. The theory was that the Senate would represent a supra-local principle.

Gregoire Bron noted that in Portugal too it was argued that a Council of State should be established. The object was explicitly to create a new aristocracy.

Mark Mazower thought that the Ionian islands would indeed make an interesting case study. They possessed a landed aristocracy, as other parts of Greece didn't. The general absence of any hereditary landed group was important in determining that social equality was not the focus of much interest within Greek politics. He noted also that under the Ottomans there had been some history of consultation and assemblies: the revolutionaries suppressed these, as elements of a regime they were rejecting. Ottoman rule was, in many instances, less burdensome to local populations than was membership of Western empires.

Sophie Wahnich expressed concern lest parliamentarism be equated with democracy, which she thought was the trend of discussion. It was important to preserve a notion of what democracy is against which to measure the pretensions of past institutions, particularly in the context of the current crisis of democracy.

Joanna responded that certainly the claims of past institutions to embody or express the will or promote the interests of the people should not be taken at face value. Increasing acceptance of 'democracy' as a possible form of government, in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Europe, was associated with an erosion of that notion's radical edge. But the terms of the project made it impossible to frame critique in terms of some timeless notion of democracy, since it was a key premise that notions of democracy were multiple time-bound. Within the terms of the projects, critical analysis would have to take other forms.

Clément Thibaud picked up on the notion of a crisis of democracy and suggested this was in part a result of secularisation. In the past, democratic individuals had been conceived as operating within a prior system of rules, the observance of which guaranteed a measure of social cohesion. The secular conception of the individual as a free-floating, desirous, idiosyncratic being placed great strain on democracy as ideal.

Maurizio indicated disagreement, but the closure of the session prevented him from making his counter-case.

Marc Aymes reiterated his concerns about the implications of the timeframe for the possibility of including Ottoman territories in the discussion. He also noted that different time frames were in any case appropriate to different forms of enquiry: conceivably the one proposed was too short to capture long-term processes and yet too long to capture other forms of change. Similarly, the question of democracy presented itself in different ways at different levels. It had a meaning at the level of government and politics, but what did it mean in everyday life? **Again, the need to end the session made it impossible to pursue this line of questioning.**

FOURTH SESSION: WHERE NEXT?

Eduardo introduced discussion. During the year there would be a series of similar meetings in Pisa [18-19 Dec 2012], Athens [12-13 Jan 2013], Madrid [11-12 Mar 2013] and Lisbon [two days in week beginning 8 Apr 2013]. Finally, scholars from all these countries would gather for a workshop in New York City [13-14 Sept 2013], where it was intended also to draw in US-based historians. In the following academic year, 2013-14, further, more formal meetings would be held in various places, including Paris. The thoughts of those present on what would be an appropriate focus for discussion in Paris were invited – though it was unlikely that any firm plan would be drawn up before the initial cycle of European meetings was completed, in April.

Joanna noted that certain things should be taken into consideration when identifying a focus for discussion in Paris. First, France was not itself a primary focus of enquiry. Whereas second-year discussions in most places would focus on local experience, that would not be an appropriate focus in France; something more general should be attempted. If France was not a primary focus, France was nonetheless an important player in the period, being a power with interests in the region, a place of refuge for exiles from the region, a source of examples and ideas, and a place in which Mediterranean developments were followed with interest. Conceivably attention could focus on France's role in relation to developments elsewhere. She noted finally, in some tension with this last point, that France was in the present day a site for diverse and wide-ranging scholarship. That made it possible to gather together in one place experts in diverse parts of the region. It would be good to find ways of exploiting this opportunity.

Mark Mazower noted that, as previous discussions had made clear, the proposal that the nineteenth century Mediterranean had some kind of common (if variegated) encounter with democracy in this period was not straightforward. By contrast, it would be much easier to consider, say, the impact of communism through the middle decades of the twentieth century. It wasn't straightforward to formulate what made a difference, though that was itself something worth considering further.

He also suggested that a possible focus might be the experience of islands and territories caught between different western empires, or between the west and the east; the way in which states handled issues of military recruitment, training and organisation post 1789; how they conceived of and organised education; the place of constitutions and the establishment of assemblies – with the establishment of assemblies in the Peloponnese – and the shift from consultative assemblies to ones in which power resided; the changing character of parliamentarianism, and its role as a model from which many people start their thinking.

It was agreed that another possible focus – given that it had been a focus of much of the day's discussion – would be the parameters of the project (chronological, geographical etc), and their implications.

That possibility would be considered when the organisers returned to the matter in a few months time.

It was suggested by participants that some among them might want to group themselves together on one or another basis to make presentations, eg the Latin Americanists might present a joint paper, or groups studying disparate regions might want to explore contrasts in experience among themselves.

The project team said that it was conceivable that they might be able to revisit Paris in late spring/early summer to discuss plans further, perhaps on a very informal basis with individuals or small groups.

Subsequent suggestions:***Natalie Richard:***

I think it would be useful to try to get an idea of the "ideal library" of groups or individuals dealing with democracy in southern Europe during the period you want to consider. Did they find common references in modern publications? Through what books did they form their idea of former historical democratic experiments (especially relatively recent, United Provinces, America, France, etc).

Another interesting topic would be to see if actors themselves stressed the specificity of the Mediterranean world in relation with democracy, and if so how? Was there a kind of "Mediterranean model" or identity invented in relation to democracy at that time?