MARE NOSTRUM: QUESTIONS OF STATE AND THE STATE OF THE QUESTION

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A rich tension underlies this special issue of *Calíope*: the *Mare Nostrum* that nourished the literary traditions we explore was an intensely contested space. Consequently, the Roman imperial assertion that marks the lexical terms of "Our Sea" becomes a point for anguished interrogation in the early modern era. Arguably, a large measure of Renaissance literature's allure comes from its manifold expressions of the rivalries among regions, nations, and religions. Of these, the rivalry between Christians and Muslims would prove an especially powerful source of inspiration. Our original commission was to prepare a volume devoted to the Battle of Lepanto, whose rich poetic legacy certainly needs no introduction. But in a series of conversations about this volume—starting with a comparative literature conference on European representations of *Turks* held at the University of Copenhagen and continuing during overlapping research trips to Madrid—we became convinced that adequate exploration would require an expanded focus. We thus move both back and forward in time, to offer a more wide ranging view of the *Mare Nostrum*. In effect, we trace a "polemics of possession," to borrow and relocate Rolena Adorno's conceptual framework for interpreting foundational Spanish-American literature.[1]

One point of caution is necessary to begin. Notwithstanding the religious antipathy between Christian and Muslim realms, many peaceful points of convergence remained. Mutually-beneficial trade relations and a profound curiosity about people from different cultural traditions would inspire many to seek contact with supposed infidels. Religious identity itself would often be a point for negotiation or adaptation, a phenomenon expressed in Natalie Zemon Davis's notion of *Trickster Travels* and Emilio Sola's conception of *los que van y vienen*.

Our initial point of departure, the Battle of Lepanto, epitomizes the complexity of Christian-Muslim rivalries in the Mediterranean

and the methodological challenges that follow for poetry studies. Commanders on both sides of the battle lines that formed on October 7, 1571 carried orders from their sovereigns to destroy the enemy in God's name. The sultan Selim II, according to Ottoman historian Halil Inalcik, had dispatched his fleets with the order to "attack the fleet of the Infidels fully trusting in God and his Prophet" (Inalcik 189). Philip II, for his part, reminded commanders they were attacking Turks in the name of all Christendom ("Relación de la Batalla de Lepanto" 216; "Instrucciones de Felipe II al marqués de Santa Cruz"). Flags hoisted on the two command ships offered stark visual confirmation of religious antipathy. Juan de Austria's *Real* displayed a crucifixion scene. Facing him, the Ottoman *Sultana* of Muëzzinzade Ali Pasha bore some twenty-thousand silken panels embroidered with God's name in Arabic. But the soldiers and commanders riding those galleys into battle attested to a more complex reality.

An examination of the cover illustration of this special issue reveals such nuances (Fig. 1). The naval clash depicted is drawn from the scene

Fig. 1. Giambattista Péroli y César Arbasia. Fresco de la *Jornada de Navarino, 1572* (detalle). Archivo-Museo Naval "Don Álvaro de Bazán".

Viso del Marqués, España.

in the right foreground of a fresco that commemorates the August 1572 Jornada of Navarino, attributed to Italian artists Giambattista Péroli and Cesare Arbasia. Those fortunate enough to have visited the palace of Álvaro de Bazán (marqués de Santa Cruz) in Viso del Marqués near Ciudad Real will recall it from a portico of the central patio. The main Muslim protagonist in the scene, Uluç Ali, is the very model of the early-modern boundary crosser. Born Dionisio Galera or Galea in Calabria (circa 1503-1507), he was captured by Muslim raiders in early adolescence. After serving as a galley slave in Muslim fleets, he converted to Islam and rose to prominence, as the governor of Algiers. By the 1570s, he was widely respected as a master of galley warfare tactics (Sola 25-28). His is the towering galley shown on the cover illustration, with the crescent flags and insignias marking his high rank in the Ottoman navy. The clash at Navarino transpired when Don Juan de Austria sought to corner Uluç Ali's fleet at this Morean port. Spanish commanders calculated that they could exploit the reduced strength of the Ottoman fleets in the wake of the Battle of Lepanto nine months earlier. Indeed, Uluç Ali was the only member of the high command who had escaped the devastation of Lepanto. But the Spanish attack was frustrated when Uluç Ali took advantage of the sheltering rocks of the fortress of Modon to evade Don Juan. This setback led to the scene shown on the cover, in which Álvaro de Bazán rows his own skiff in a final effort to stop the Calabrian's escape. Rendering an overall Spanish setback into a scene of family glory, the fresco memorializes a singular act. The helmeted Bazán rows into danger, preparing to confront more numerous enemy forces. We thus see turbaned Janissaries swimming to board his skiff and stop him. This exaltation of individual action epitomizes the iconographic program of the palace frescoes, which Ignacio López Alemany connects to a particular interpretation of Livy's Marcus Curtius Romanus ("The Legend of Marcus Curtius Romanus" 88-90; *Ilusión áulica* 77-78). Yet a complete account of Navarino shows yet another instance where Mediterranean warfare at sea did not easily fit into imperial narrative patterns. Apparently impervious to Bazán's feat of heroism, Uluç Ali steered the escaping fleet back to Constantinople. Historians have long conceived the frustrated attack at Navarino as a death knell for the Holy League alliance (Guilmartin 63).

An even more ambiguous cloak-and-dagger drama had unfolded around the same Muslim adversary shortly before the events depicted

in the La Mancha palace fresco. Knowing Uluç Ali had escaped the devastation at Lepanto, Don Juan de Austria approved a secret mission to offer the Muslim a noble title and bribe in exchange for changing sides. One proposal was that he "deliver" a fortress to the Spaniards. Don Juan thus authorized payment to another Calabrian who promised to find Uluç Ali in the same Morea region where the battle at Navarino would take place. This secret agent had, like Uluç Ali himself, converted to Islam when he served as a captive galley slave. But unlike his famous countryman, he had returned to the Christian fold upon liberation, escape, or recapture ("Instrucciones de don Juan de Austria a Pedro Paulo de Arcuri"). The goal of recruiting Uluç Ali to the Spanish cause followed from a long-standing fascination with him. Philip II and his military advisors marveled at the Calabrian's transformation from the utter abjection of a captive galley slave to the apex of Muslim naval command. Despite repeated Spanish entreaties, surviving documents suggest he lived the rest of his life as befitting a revered Muslim naval commander. But even so, identity remained complex. Emilio Sola cites, for instance, letters in which Christian mariners recommend carrying fine Italian cheese to offer Uluç Ali as a negotiating tactic (65-66, 148-49).

A similarly complex range of attitudes shaped poetry writing. Juan Latino's *Austriad* (*Song of John of Austria*) portrays Uluç Ali as a treacherous warlord (*perfidus [...] regulus*; Latino, ll. 1339-1347). Yet in parallel, the poet and pedagogue of Granada shows profound sympathy to other Muslim fighters at Lepanto, most notably the Turkish admiral Muëzinzzade Ali Pasha, who died in combat. Such nuances have not always informed critical studies. Justifiably, Sola laments the dizzying accumulation of articles and books on Lepanto, in which he still finds abundant traces of Catholic nationalism (193).

Mindful of Sola's caution, this special issue speaks to the new vistas and horizons for exploring sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Hispanic poetry in its Mediterranean contexts. Recently, UCLA's Clark Library has hosted symposia that have offered fresh perspectives on a realm of inquiry first outlined in Fernand Braudel's monumental *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II* (1949). The 2010 volume *Braudel Revisited: The Mediterranean World 1600-1800* (ed. Gabriel Piterberg, Teófilo Ruiz, and Geoffrey Symcox) explores politics, language, anthropology, and music, realms

the French *annalist* bypassed in favor of the broad regional dynamics of trade, warfare, and agriculture. For their part, Barbara Fuchs and Emily Weissbourd propose a study of the cultural history of empires in relational terms in the forthcoming *Representing Imperial Rivalry in the Early Modern Mediterranean*. Within this framework, they gather diverse manifestations of inter-imperiality, drawing on discourses of cartography, portraiture, historiography, epic poetry, and theater. In the realm of religion and spirituality, the research team led by Mercedes García-Arenal of Spain's CSIC has received major European Research Council funding for a project, "Conversion, Overlapping Religiosities, Polemics, Interaction: Early Modern Iberia and Beyond"; this team will explore the blurred boundaries among the major Mediterranean religions.

Within Hispanic studies, new interdisciplinary studies invite a thorough reconsideration of the meaning and scope of Golden Age literature. Antonio de Sosa's revelatory 1612 *Topografía de Argel*—misattributed in the *princeps* to Diego de Haedo—is now available in the magnificent scholarly edition prepared by Maria Antonia Garcés, with a translation by Diana de Armas Wilson. The book offers many glimpses of a pan-Mediterranean literary culture. At key points, we see how Antonio de Sosa the theologian struggles with Antonio de Sosa the avid reader: "The other Algerians, wherever they get together, are all generally bigger producers of fiction and tellers of lies than were ever found in the grandstands of Seville or in the smelting furnaces of Málaga. [...] And they claim that captives owe much to them, because these news stories lighten the work of captivity, continually diverting the mind and imagination from their chains" (Sosa 243). We can see here how Sosa became friends with fellow captive Miguel de Cervantes. Expanding our capacity to visualize this Cervantine context, Steven Hutchinson and Antonio Cortijo-Ocaña have edited the first monographic edition of *eHumanista*, entitled *Cervantes y el Mediterráneo / Cervantes and the Mediterranean.* For his part, Jesús David Jérez-Gómez has drawn new attention to how a pan-Mediterranean oral history animates the Maese Pedro episode of *Don Quijote*.

The task then remains to concentrate on the specificities of poetry writing. After all, there has been a longstanding tendency to foreground prose and drama in examinations of the literary manifestations of early modernity. In this regard, we are inspired by the conceptual framework

that Anthony Cascardi and Leah Middlebrook have followed in *Poiesis and Modernity in the Old and New Worlds*. The volume questions the longstanding assumption that prosification and secularization powered the era's momentous cultural transformations. Another spur to action for this issue comes from the recent special issue of *Criticón* devoted to "La poesía épica del Siglo de Oro" edited by Rodrigo Cacho Casal.

For our part, we trace the changing Mediterranean with a particular emphasis on lyric and narrative poetry, but with considerations of travel narratives, chronicles, and news bulletins along the way. Contributions thus span across the region, taking us to Orán (Mar Martínez Góngora), La Goleta (Miguel Martínez), Malta (Lara Vilà), Lepanto, and the literary academies of Italy (Mercedes Blanco), the Middle East (Luce López-Baralt), Constantinople (Mikael Bøgh Rasmussen), and finally, to the emerging notion of a greater Atlantic that initially drew on Mediterranean paradigms (Elizabeth B. Davis).

Mercedes Blanco, in "La batalla de Lepanto y la cuestión del poema heroico," casts light on a fundamental duality of Spanish Golden-Age literature: how poets and literary theorists drew on high form aesthetics from Antiquity in their quest to find the language and form appropriate for their own times. Her essay invites a thorough recalibration of historiographical hierarchies that have long defined studies of Mediterranean warfare at sea in the sixteenth century, particularly in the case of Lepanto. The implications of her essay are transcendent, in that her analysis invites us to assert the primacy of poetry writing for understanding statecraft in the late sixteenth century, a field in which the agenda has long been set by historians working in state papers. With all the respect due John H. Elliott and other historians of early modern Spain, Blanco's essay considers how poetry and poetics shaped elite action and state policy.

Another methodological challenge emerges from the essay by Luce López-Baralt, "Entre Oriente y Occidente: la poesía de san Juan de la Cruz y el problema histórico de su recepción." She distills four decades of inquiries devoted to revealing traces of the "fragrance of Yemen" that infuses the lyric poetry of san Juan de la Cruz. Specifically, López-Baralt maps intriguing and unexplored paths from Spain eastward. See, for example, her recollection of how a conversation with an Iraqui student about the *filomena* prompted her to rethink Juan de la Cruz. But López-Baralt's eastward scholarly itinerary offers a reminder of how much work

yet remains to be done to account for the Arabic, Persian, and Hebrew literary currents that were concealed from view, first by Inquisitorial pressure, then by the *españolismo* that shaped the discipline of literary history and criticism.

For his part, Miguel Martínez analyzes how traditions of epic poetry adapt to new conceptions of subjectivity that emerge in the era's new modes of autobiography. In "La vida de los héroes: épica y autobiografía en el Mediterráneo Habsburgo," Martínez illuminates an overlooked autobiographical epic, el *Libro de casos impensados*, by Alonso de Salamanca. He shows how the writer reconciles epic form to autobiographical narrative, giving voice to the experience of captivity and defeat that resulted from Spanish setbacks at La Goleta and Tunis.

The power of poetry to give meaning to imperial setbacks likewise informs Mar Martínez Góngora's "Los romances africanos de Luis de Góngora y la presencia española en el Magreb." Her essay delves into Luis de Góngora's "Español de Orán" cycle of ballads composed circa 1585-1587, considering how the poet projects the unsated desires and aspirations of Spanish imperialism on representations of the presidios of North Africa. Martínez-Góngora blends analysis of poetry and material culture to consider how North Africa remained tantalizingly in sight but out of reach at the high-water mark of Spanish imperialism in the later sixteenth century.

A view from the other side of the Mediterranean, into the Ottoman Sublime Porte, or Constantinople, emerges in "Enemy Enticements: A Habsburg Artist in Süleyman's Capital City," from Mikael Bøgh Rasmussen. Though not directly focused on poetry writing, this piece offers crucial context by examining a seminal representation of the center of Ottoman power. Rasmussen examines and contextualizes the woodcut images that document a Habsburg diplomatic mission of 1555-1559. Melchior Lorck's woodcuts of the Ottoman Porte depict Turks through a visual language that would gain wide currency in Europe.

Turning westward to one of the most fiercely contested spaces, Lara Vilà's "La poesía de la guerra en el Mediterráneo: la defensa de Malta en la épica del Quinientos" draws attention to the literary legacy of the 1565 Ottoman siege. The almost unimaginable scale of bloodshed has often been overshadowed by Lepanto in literary studies. But Malta also made a mark on poetry. Vilà contrasts how two strikingly different

epic poems draw on the circa 1567 eye-witness account by Francisco Balbi di Correggio, an arquebusier who fought alongside a Spanish contingent. *La Maltea*, by Hipólito Sans (? -1582), is a twelve-canto epic that closely adheres to Balbi's chronicle. Vilà contrasts this epic *verismo* with the 1599 Malta epic by Diego de Santisteban Osorio. The poet, best known for his 1597 sequel to Ercilla's *La Araucana* (*Quarta y quinta parte de La Araucana*), draws inspiration from Carolingian epic, Ariostan *romanzo*, and the literature of Maurofilia to recount Malta's ordeal in the twenty-five cantos of the *Primera y segunda parte de las guerras de Malta y toma de Rodas*. Another fascinating line of inquiry here is Vilà's analysis of how the horrific bloodshed on Malta nonetheless nourished amorous interludes in the Santisteban Osorio poem, offering a line of examination that complements Aude Plagnard's recent analysis of this question in literary depictions of the Ottoman invasion of Cyprus.

Disciplinary and methodological questions guide Elizabeth B. Davis's "From the Mare Nostrum to the Mar Océano and Back: Oceanic Studies, Mediterranean Studies, and the Place of Poetry." We propose the piece following the inspiration of the "Theories and Methodologies" section of the *PMLA*. In particular, Davis foregrounds Mediterranean studies as an academic field and contemplates the place therein of poetry studies. Implications are two-fold: first, poetry and poetics merit greater attention in Mediterranean studies; second, this field merits more programmatic inclusion in the emerging field of Oceanic studies. One is reminded again how area studies sub-disciplines have tended to assume the primacy of history, politics, and economics. Let us then make the case for poetry and poetics, here and beyond.

Before turning this forum over to our contributors who so eloquently do this, some thanks are in order. Most of all, we thank these six colleagues who contributed essays. Also, we are grateful to founding editor Julián Olivares for his initial spark of inspiration. Finally, we thank Ignacio López Alemany, who inherited this project already underway, but guided it to completion with a magical blend of collegial generosity and editorial acumen.

NOTE

[1] Indeed, in *The Polemics of Possession*, Adorno attests to points of connection between American and Mediterranean contact zones, drawing attention to how efforts to suppress Bernardino de Sahagún's monumental work of Nahuatl scholarship coincided with efforts in Spain to suppress Arabic writing (213).

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