

NUOVA **ANTOLOGIA** 

**MILITARE**

RIVISTA INTERDISCIPLINARE DELLA SOCIETÀ ITALIANA DI STORIA MILITARE

N. 5  
2024

Fascicolo 19. Giugno 2024  
**Storia Militare Moderna**



*Società Italiana di Storia Militare*

Direttore scientifico Virgilio Ilari  
Vicedirettore scientifico Giovanni Brizzi  
Direttore responsabile Gregory Claude Alegi  
Redazione Viviana Castelli

*Consiglio Scientifico.* Presidente: Massimo De Leonardis.

*Membri stranieri:* Christopher Bassford, Floribert Baudet, Stathis Birthacas, Jeremy Martin Black, Loretana de Libero, Magdalena de Pazzis Pi Corrales, Gregory Hanlon, John Hattendorf, Rotem Kowner, Yann Le Bohec, Aleksei Nikolaevič Lobin, Prof. Armando Marques Guedes, Prof. Dennis Showalter (†). *Membri italiani:* Livio Antonielli, Marco Bettalli, Antonello Folco Biagini, Aldino Bondesan, Franco Cardini, Piero Cimbolli Spagnesi, Piero del Negro, Giuseppe De Vergottini, Carlo Galli, Marco Gemignani, Roberta Ivaldi, Nicola Labanca, Luigi Loreto, Gian Enrico Rusconi, Carla Sodini, Giocchino Strano, Donato Tamblé.

*Comitato consultivo sulle scienze militari e gli studi di strategia, intelligence e geopolitica:* Lucio Caracciolo, Flavio Carbone, Basilio Di Martino, Antulio Joseph Echevarria II, Carlo Jean, Gianfranco Linzi, Edward N. Luttwak, Matteo Paesano, Ferdinando Sanfelice di Monteforte.

*Consulenti di aree scientifiche interdisciplinari:* Donato Tamblé (Archival Sciences), Piero Cimbolli Spagnesi (Architecture and Engineering), Immacolata Eramo (Philology of Military Treatises), Simonetta Conti (Historical Geo-Cartography), Lucio Caracciolo (Geopolitics), Jeremy Martin Black (Global Military History), Elisabetta Fiocchi Malaspina (History of International Law of War), Gianfranco Linzi (Intelligence), Elena Franchi (Memory Studies and Anthropology of Conflicts), Virgilio Ilari (Military Bibliography), Luigi Loreto (Military Historiography), Basilio Di Martino (Military Technology and Air Studies), John Brewster Hattendorf (Naval History and Maritime Studies), Elina Gugliuzzo (Public History), Vincenzo Lavenia (War and Religion), Angela Teja (War and Sport), Stefano Pisu (War Cinema), Giuseppe Della Torre (War Economics).

### *Nuova Antologia Militare*

Rivista interdisciplinare della Società Italiana di Storia Militare  
Periodico telematico open-access annuale ([www.nam-sism.org](http://www.nam-sism.org))  
Registrazione del Tribunale Ordinario di Roma n. 06 del 30 Gennaio 2020  
Scopus List of Accepted Titles October 2022 (No. 597).  
Rivista scientifica ANVUR (5/9/2023)



Direzione, Via Bosco degli Arvali 24, 00148 Roma  
Contatti: [direzione@nam-sigm.org](mailto:direzione@nam-sigm.org) ; [virgilio.ilari@gmail.com](mailto:virgilio.ilari@gmail.com)

©Authors hold the copyright of their own articles.

For the Journal: © Società Italiana di Storia Militare  
([www.societaitalianastoriamilitare@org](http://www.societaitalianastoriamilitare@org))

Grafica: Nadir Media Srl - Via Giuseppe Veronese, 22 - 00146 Roma  
[info@nadirmedia.it](mailto:info@nadirmedia.it)

Gruppo Editoriale Tab Srl -Viale Manzoni 24/c - 00185 Roma  
[www.tabedizioni.it](http://www.tabedizioni.it)

ISSN: 2704-9795

ISBN Fascicolo 9788892959330

NUOVA **ANTOLOGIA**   
**MILITARE**  
RIVISTA INTERDISCIPLINARE DELLA SOCIETÀ ITALIANA DI STORIA MILITARE

N. 5  
2024

Fascicolo 19. Giugno 2024  
**Storia Militare Moderna**



*Società Italiana di Storia Militare*



Banner With the Lion of St. Mark (banner) Italy, Venice, 1675.  
Cleveland Museum of Art Gift of Mr. and Mrs. John L. Severance 1916.1807.  
CC0 1.0 Universal Public Domain.

## Mediterranean Geopolitics: A British Perspective

BY JEREMY BLACK

Geopolitics takes on value as an approach when it is seen as a tool for thinking and not a starkly, deterministic, ‘geography as destiny’ assertion, the approach all-too-frequently adopted, and notably in the public domain. As a tool for thinking, geopolitics offers the prospect of numerous viewpoints, and, while not all are of equal value, it is useful to note this range. This is very much enhanced if geopolitics is further seen in part as a discourse, rhetoric, or product and means, of perception. On the one hand, there is the clear objectivity of physical geography of the type of ‘here-be iron’ or ‘this is the distance from a to b’. Yet, there are also the subjectivities bound up in perception and, indeed, in the response to physical geography. In part, we have an aspect of the interactions of physical and human geography, and in part of the diverse strands bound up in the circumstances and dynamics of human geography. Indeed, geopolitics belongs to human geography, but with an understanding of the debates inherent to the latter.

And so with our particular angle, a British perspective, and please note not the British perspective, for the latter would imply that there was only one, which is definitely not the case, either for the Mediterranean or for a more general British approach to geopolitics, strategy and policy, even at any one particular period. The latter caveat is true for both ‘the’ British analysis and ‘the’ implementation. To argue, instead, that there was only one perspective is to downplay the politicised character of geopolitics.<sup>1</sup>

---

1 J. Black, *Geopolitics and the Quest for Dominance* (Bloomington, Ind., 2015), *Geographies of an Imperial Power: The British World, 1688-1815* (Bloomington, 2017), *Rethinking Geopolitics* (Bloomington, 2024) and ‘Geopolitics Since the Cold War,’ *RUSI Journal*, 168, no. 6 (2003).

Geopolitics as subject is made more problematic not only because the term has not been in use until comparatively recently, but also due to the extent to which the subsequent literature was on the whole schematic, deterministic and assertive, rather than offering nuance. In searching, nevertheless, for a common theme as far as the Mediterranean is concerned, it would be that British consideration was fundamentally on it as naval campaigning stage and maritime thoroughfare. This meant that the Mediterranean was not considered primarily as a littoral area which encompassed much of Europe's expertise, skill and resource as well as an important quotient of both from North Africa and the Middle East.

The maritime, more particularly naval, priority ensured that the Mediterranean was generally seen by the British in terms of deployment and bases, more particularly real or potential British ones that were necessary to support such deployment. As such, it was largely a Mediterranean of islands, including Gibraltar as an, in effect, island base; although Alexandria from 1882 was not such a base. There was also the need to assess hostile bases, particularly those of France, more specifically Toulon, although in 1940-2 France's North African naval bases, especially Mers-el-Kebir, came to receive particular attention.

For the Royal Navy, the need to mask Toulon helped ensure a concern for the Western Mediterranean that was far greater than that with the Eastern. This was an aspect of perspective and policy driving geopolitics, rather than of some contrary situation in which there was a supposedly inherent geographical importance. In naval terms, the islands of the western basin of the Mediterranean, including the Tyrrhenian Sea but also the Balearics, were more consequential than those further east, a situation that did not really change until the Russian challenge became more prominent in the second half of the nineteenth century, or, rather, was presented as more prominent. Masking Toulon helped make Minorca and Corsica of great significance for Britain, with Gibraltar and Malta as backups. At the same time, the whole of the western Mediterranean was pertinent, not least due to the need to supply British bases, including with food from North Africa.

The focus on naval bases brought a particular geopolitics, one that changed with developments in technology, notably the shift from sail to steam and, later, the development of air power. There was also the major geopolitical shift caused by the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. Begun in 1859, this helped increase the geopolitical significance of Egypt, notably the ports of Alexandria and Suez, and, conversely, affected alternative earlier British (and other) plans for a geopolitical



Fig. 1 British Possessions in the Mediterranean

axis via Syria and Iraq to the Persian Gulf, plans revived with the German Berlin to Baghdad and Basra rail plans.

The Suez Canal was a prime instance of the Mediterranean as route plus exit, rather than route to destination. Indeed, the geopolitics of routes to Mediterranean littoral destinations overlapped with, but could also contrast with, that of route to destination outside the Mediterranean, via maritime exits or over overland routes. Some of the latter were a matter of valleys or mountain passes, as in British plans to move from Italy into the Balkans in 1944, but there were also broader exits that were less fixed in this fashion notably into the Middle East. The British presence in Tangier in 1661-84, and the naval overwintering or basing in Cadiz on various occasions from 1693, can both be seen as other instances of the process by which ‘the Mediterranean’ extended further in terms of British interests, not least because Cadiz, like also Lisbon, could serve as a base for power projection into the Mediterranean. So, from 1704, with Gibraltar at once both Mediterranean and Atlantic.

It is also possible to extend this spatial ‘plasticity’ of the Mediterranean to include British interests and presences via the Aegean into the Black Sea. This was seen in naval attempts to influence developments in Turkey from the Napoleonic Wars, to the unsuccessful Aegean campaign in 1943, with the Crimean War a highpoint of forward projection. A second highpoint came with the occupation of the Straits after World War One until 1923, a period in which initially there was also major British participation in the Russian Civil War, including the presence of forces in southern Russia and at Batumi.

There are aspects of geopolitics in which physical geography was to the fore, accepting, at the same time, that geography has many definitions. There was, in contrast, the geopolitics of politics located in (geographical) space, but with the politics more to the fore. Here, the crucial variable was power-politics and, more particularly, the alignment of specific areas with states or polities, as in a consideration of the impact of say the Angevin or the Aragonese or the Habsburg empires.

A standard British approach is to emphasise this level of control, not least by thinking in terms of modern states, as in French or Spanish or Austrian or Turkish, Mediterranean policies. The interaction of these with, in addition, the interplay with outside powers such as Britain, then becomes the subject of geopolitics. This is seen further with modern historical atlases which use undifferentiated



blocs of colour in order to provide a clear sense that the geopolitical actors were modern states of that type.<sup>2</sup>

That, however, is not a very helpful approach, for it ignores the politics of geography in the shape of the compromises and alignments within states, and, indeed, the complexity of the nature of the state. Here we are thinking not so much of modern states where power is contested, as in Libya and Syria, and, possibly, increasingly other countries, but, rather, pre-modern polities in which there was a limitation of power and compromise of government accordingly with ideologies that are different to those of today. Moreover, those who are descendants of territories under the control of such states are better able to understand the nature of past power.

Possibly the British, particularly the English, who have had relative political cohesion for over a millennium, are not so well-placed to appreciate this situation. There is also the problem posed, as in this piece, by terms such as France or Austria or Spain as summaries for a more complex reality.

To approach British attitudes, we will take several episodes, because a narrative of the full coverage would require many volumes. These attitudes do not include the long period in which British power was not part of the equation (in reality or speculation) and thus discussion, because consideration then is in large part a matter of historiography, although geopolitics as applied or mediated or understood through historiography is indeed a subject of great interest.

To begin in the age of sail is to take note of the impact of sailing conditions on warships. The pattern of Mediterranean currents is at once simple, yet also complex. The former is explained by the major current moving in a counter-clockwise direction eastwards along the coast of North Africa, then from south to north past Israel and Lebanon, before moving back westwards along the northern shore of the Mediterranean to the Strait of Gibraltar. Yet, complex because of differences in surface, intermediate and deep-water masses, and because the Mediterranean is in part a product of subsidiary seas – from east to west, the Aegean, Adriatic and Tyrrhenian – and there is significant disruption to currents and weather produced

---

2 For a more sophisticated approach, F. Somaini, *Geografie Politiche Italiane. Tra Medio Evo e Rinascimento* (Milan, 2012). See also J. Black, *Maps and History: Constructing Images of the Past* (New Haven, Conn., 1997)..

by islands, notably, but not only, Cyprus, Sicily, Crete, Sardinia and Corsica.<sup>3</sup>

Alongside currents came the pattern of the winds, which changed very greatly by season and in response to weather systems. Thus, summer winds in the eastern Mediterranean tend to come from the north-west. Winds, such as the mistral, a strong southerly that blows onto the coast of Provence, wrecking ships, made being able to take shelter in harbours very important. The operational impact of the weather was greater in the technology of the past. Galleys had a low freeboard and therefore were vulnerable to high waters in poor weather. Two English kings, Richard I and Edward I, were on the Crusade in the eastern Mediterranean, and their options were affected by sailing conditions as well as power politics.<sup>4</sup>

Currents, winds, and shipping helped direct practical geopolitics in the Age of Sail. Timing was also an element, for it took time to send a significant fleet from British waters, Gibraltar could not shelter or support a large squadron, and there was no base further east. In 1718, the Spanish threat to attack Sicily led the government to threaten the dispatch of a fleet, the British envoy in Paris writing to a Secretary of State: 'I think we should never let it be called in question that our fleet will go into the Mediterranean.'<sup>5</sup> This did not deter the Spaniards from an invasion, with a successful landing at Palermo on 3 July, but on 11 August the British heavily defeated the Spanish fleet off Cape Passaro.

Yet, as the Spanish force had already landed, the crisis revealed that intervention would be too late unless there was a well-informed and ably directed fleet present, a point underlined when the French successfully invaded Minorca in 1756 and Egypt in 1798. The crude measure of power, in this case the number of warships, was inappropriate unless it could be linked to an ability to use this power to full effectiveness. That included the use of bases, such as Messina during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. Looked at differently, the measure of both power and effectiveness depended heavily on the particular time-scale in question.

---

3 T.M. El-Geziry and I.G. Bryden, 'The circulation pattern in the Mediterranean Seas: issues for modeller consideration,' *Journal of Operational Oceanography*, 3,2 (2010), pp. 39-46.

4 J. Pryor, *Shipping, Trade and Crusade in the Medieval Mediterranean: Studies in the Maritime History of the Mediterranean, 649-1571* (Cambridge, 1988).

5 John, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Stair, to James, Earl Stanhope, 6 Mar. 1718, Maidstone, Kent Archives, U1590 0145/24.

There was no doubt in the British official mind that the geopolitics of the Mediterranean was linked to the wider geopolitics of the European world. The Royal Speech, written by James, Earl Stanhope, and delivered in November 1718, provided a defence of British policy as a response to Spanish aggression:

‘the [Austro-Turkish] war in Hungary, which by our mediation is since happily ended, having tempted the court of Spain unjustly to attack the Emperor, and the hopes they have since conceived of raising disturbances in Britain, France, and elsewhere, having encouraged them to believe, that we should not be able to act in pursuance of our treaties ... they have not only persisted in such a notorious violation of the public peace and tranquillity, but have rejected all our amicable proposals and have broke through their most solemn engagements for the security of our commerce.

To vindicate therefore the faith of our former treaties, as well as to maintain those which we have lately made, and to protect and defend the trade of my subjects ... it became necessary for our naval forces to check their progress.’

Yet, to underline the extent to which geopolitics is inherently political, the Parliamentary debate over the royal speech saw Robert Walpole, the leader of the opposition Whigs, pejoratively call Stanhope a knight-errant of the Emperor, Charles VI, the ruler of Austria. Walpole was urging caution about interventionist politics, a stance that, as Prime Minister, helped ensure that the British did not oppose Franco-Spanish intervention against Austria in Italy during the War of the Polish Succession (1733-5).

Domestic pressure was again mentioned in February 1720, when James Craggs, a Secretary of State, explained that Britain could not yield Gibraltar as the price of peace, as earlier hinted, and as sought by Spain and by Britain’s then ally France:

‘His Majesty’s servants and people ... agree that the cession of that place would not only be a ridicule upon our successes in this war, but that the possession of it will be a great security to our trade in the Mediterranean. And therefore His Majesty were ever so much disposed to part with it; it may well be doubted whether he would have it in his power to do so.’<sup>6</sup>

Aside from naval planning, it is therefore pertinent to look at the public debate over policy, which increasingly focused on the Mediterranean from the early eighteenth century. In 1718, the engraver and impressive mathematician Reeve

---

6 Craggs to Stair, 18 Feb. 1720, London, National Archives, State Papers, 104/31 (hereafter NA. SP.).

Williams wrote a pamphlet in defence of British intervention in Mediterranean power-politics. The inclusion of a map added to the interest of his *Letter from a Merchant to a Member of Parliament, Relating to the Danger Great Britain is in of Losing her Trade, by the Great Increase of the Naval Power of Spain with a Chart of the Mediterranean Sea Annexed*. The Lord Chancellor, Thomas, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Macclesfield, who had a strong personal interest in mathematics, allegedly ordered the printing of 7,000 copies and Williams a further 2,000.<sup>7</sup> This pamphlet was designed to explain the commercial rationale for British geopolitics, and notably a defence of a major act of power-projection.

On a frequent pattern, the impact of the pamphlet was increased by press coverage, the *Worcester Post-Man* of November 21, 1718 reporting:

‘Last Saturday a notable book was delivered to the Members of Parliament, with a chart annexed of the Mediterranean Sea, whereby it demonstrately appears of what importance it is to the trade of Great Britain, that Sicily and Sardinia should be in the hands of a faithful ally, and if possible not one formidable by sea. That these two islands lie like two nets spread to intercept not only the Italian but Turkey and Levant trade.... That should the naval power of Spain increase in the manner it has lately done, that kingdom may assume to herself that trade of the Mediterranean Sea, and impose what she pleases as the King of Denmark does at Elsinore [at the entrance to the Baltic].’

Reporting in other newspapers, such as *Whitehall Evening Post* of December 2, 1718, reflected the arguments of the pamphlet.

The Baltic remained, as in this item, a point of reference, one made far more relevant by Russian expansion, but British geopolitical interest was by the 1710s increasingly focused on the Mediterranean as well. In part, this was due to the regular deployment of the Royal Navy into the Mediterranean and in part a result of the salience of Mediterranean power politics focused in particular on Italy, and the impact of this power politics on the potential of British geopolitics which became far more interventionist after the accession of William III in 1689, apparently requiring alliance with Austria. Alliance with Russia from 1734 decreased concern over the Baltic, an aspect of the significance of wider geopolitics for regional geopolitics.

The Mediterranean had come to the fore again for Britain in 1725 when an

---

<sup>7</sup> Cambridge, University Library, Cholmondeley Houghton papers, Mss 73/4/1.

unexpected alliance between Philip V of Spain and the Emperor Charles VI led to anxiety about their intentions, including against George I and British interests. The government focused on naval action as a key response, notably, but not only, in the Mediterranean. Charles, 2<sup>nd</sup> Viscount Townshend, the senior Secretary of State, that for the Northern Department, told Count Broglie, the French ambassador, that it would be easy to seize Sicily,<sup>8</sup> but this was bravado as well as part of the rhetoric of geopolitics. The possibility of a British attack on Austrian-ruled Naples was mentioned by the Austrian Chancellor, Count Sinzendorf.<sup>9</sup>

The threat of naval attack on Naples and Sicily was seen by the ministry as a way to deter Austrian action elsewhere,<sup>10</sup> notably against Hanover, but that downplayed the need for naval support in Atlantic, Baltic and Caribbean waters, the issue of alternative commitments that was repeatedly to affect the British naval position in the Mediterranean as in the 1790s, 1800s and early 1920s. Louis de St Saphorin, the British envoy in Vienna, claimed that the presence of a British fleet in the Mediterranean, and the possibility of its taking action would prevent Austria withdrawing troops from Italy.<sup>11</sup> However, Walpole's diplomat brother, Horatio, was much more sceptical, pressing Thomas, Duke of Newcastle, the Secretary of State for the Southern Department, accordingly, in what was a bold critique of the optimistic geopolitics of activity:

‘... nor can I see the great use of Sir John Jennings appearing off Naples. It will make a noise, but when he comes home again without doing anything, I do not think the laugh will be on our side ... the sending a fleet into the Mediterranean to prevent an encampment in Silesia will appear ridiculous, if that fleet shall do nothing there... St Saphorin is a good judge of the Court of Vienna, but not of the House of Commons.’<sup>12</sup>

An Austrian encampment in Silesia was a way to get Prussia to abandon its alliance with Britain and turn to Austria, which indeed happened in 1726. The

---

8 Broglie to Count Morville, French Foreign Minister, 3 Aug. 1725, Paris, Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Correspondance Politique, Angleterre 352 f. 17.

9 Sir John Graeme, Jacobite envoy in Vienna, to John Hay, Earl of Inverness, Jacobite Secretary of State, 31 Aug. 1736, Windsor Castle Royal Archives, Stuart Papers (hereafter RA) 96/128.

10 Townshend to Charles Du Bourgay, British envoy in Berlin, 7 June 1726, NA. SP. 90/20.

11 St Saphorin to Count Törring, Bavarian Foreign Minister, 25 July 1726, Munich, Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Kasten Schwarz, 17433.

12 Horatio Walpole to Newcastle, 26 June 1726, London, British Library, Department of Manuscripts, Additional Manuscripts, 32746 f. 296-7.

role of Parliament in geopolitics, and vice versa, was further captured that November when the Jacobite Secretary of State proposed that Philip V and Charles VI publicly demand Gibraltar and Minorca in order to show the British public that government policy was failing.<sup>13</sup> In 1726-7 and 1730-1, there are few signs that the threat of British naval action against Austrian Italy affected Austrian policy, no more than the dispatch of warships to the Mediterranean affected that of Revolutionary France in 1792-3.

Agreements in 1748-52 involving Austria, France and Spain had reduced tension over Italy, while in the same period concern over Germany continued strong as geopolitics adjusted to Prussian assertiveness. As a result, interest in the Mediterranean was more episodic from 1748 until it revived in 1797-8 as the future of Italy became a matter of greater weight after French victories in northern Italy in 1795-6. Northern Italy was of far less consequence to Britain than Southern with its more conspicuous Mediterranean role; but control over Northern Italy opened the way for French military pressure further south. The added issue of the future of the Ottoman Empire drove on this concern. Spain's alliance with France from 1796 was a problem, while France's entry into the Eastern Question led to a series of responses including the capture and retention of Malta, the occupation of Alexandria in 1801 and 1807, the unsuccessful attempt to intimidate the Turks by naval action, in 1807, campaigning in the Adriatic against the French, and the postwar retention of the Ionian Islands.

One aspect of the British geopolitical presence was that of surveying. As a frigate captain, Francis Beaufort was active in 1810-12 in Turkish waters, seeking to suppress pirates and to survey the coast, only to be badly wounded in a clash. He subsequently produced charts based on his survey and, alongside William Smyth's hydrographic surveys, his *Karamania* (1817) was an aspect of the process by which the British controlled the Mediterranean through naming it. Smyth published the *Hydrography of Sicily, Malta and the Adjacent Islands* (1823) and also surveyed the Adriatic and the North African coast. He rose to be a Rear-Admiral, and to be President of the Royal Geographical Society and the Royal Astronomical Society. In 1829, Beaufort became Hydrographer to the Navy, a post he held until 1855.

Maps had to be used with care and they could make the Mediterranean ap-

---

<sup>13</sup> Hay to Graeme, 12 Oct. 1726, RA. 98/7.



Fig. 2 South Italian Railway India Mail London-Brindisi-Bombay.

pear part of a misplaced anxiety. In 1877, in the aftermath of the Crimean War of 1854-6, a legacy that had to be defended, as British anxieties about Russian expansion reached a new height, Robert, 3<sup>rd</sup> Marquess of Salisbury, the Secretary of State for India, declared in Parliament:

‘I cannot help thinking that in discussions of this kind, a great deal of misapprehension arises from the popular use of maps on a small scale. As with such maps you are able to put a thumb on India and a finger on Russia, some persons at once think that the political situation is alarming and that India must be looked to. If the noble Lord would use a larger map – say one on the scale of the Ordnance Map of England – he would find that the distance between Russia and British India is not to be measured by the finger and thumb, but by a rule.’<sup>14</sup>

14 House of Lords, 11 June 1877, Hansard, Third Series, vol. 234, col. 1565.

No such map was available, but Salisbury, in urging caution about Russian expansionism, was stressing that maps had to be understood if they were to be used effectively.

This concern about Russia helped enhance Britain's interest in the Eastern Mediterranean in the international crisis of 1877-8, with a fleet dispatched to protect Constantinople (Istanbul), the occupation of Cyprus and, soon after, that of Egypt. There had been no comparable naval attempt to prevent French intervention in Spain in 1823 or Italy in 1849 and 1859, or the changes within Italy in 1859-60. This contrast shows the extent to which military tasking was dependent on geopolitical choice a mediated through strategic decisions.

From the late nineteenth century, Britain became the main maritime power in the Eastern Mediterranean, and a concerned observer of the schemes of others. Thus, in 1912, Rear-Admiral Ernest Troubridge, the Chief of the War Staff of the British Admiralty, in a memorandum on the Italian occupation of certain of the Dodecanese, Turkish islands in the Aegean Sea, particularly Rhodes, noted of British policy

‘A cardinal factor has naturally been that no strong naval power should be in effective permanent occupation of any territory or harbour east of Malta, if such harbour be capable of transformation into a fortified naval base. None can foresee the developments of material in warfare, and the occupation of the apparently most useless island should be resisted equally with the occupation of the best. The geographical situation of these islands enable the sovereign power, if enjoying the possession of a navy, to exercise a control over the Levant and Black Sea trade and to threaten our position in Egypt.’<sup>15</sup>

A reminder of the variety of forums for geopolitics and of the diversity of assumptions and language could be seen the previous year in the preface to the *New School Atlas of Modern History* (1911) by Ramsay Muir, Professor of Modern History at Liverpool University. For the map of Europe in 1815 readers were instructed to:

‘Note especially the features of the settlement, which by disregarding national sentiment produced the principal troubles of the 19<sup>th</sup> century ... the restoration of the old disunion in Italy, and the controlling power exercised by Austria there in the possession of Lombardy and Venetia; the one

---

15 C. Stephenson, *A Box of Sand: The Italo-Ottoman War, 1911-1912* (Ticehurst, 2014), pp. 182-3.



favourable feature being the expansion of the Kingdom of Sardinia by the addition of Liguria and other lands.’

The battles for Gaza were tough and cost hard. It proved a difficult target with the defenders well-dug in. It took three battles spread out over much of the year before Gaza fell.

2023-4? No, 1917, with the attackers the British advancing not from the direction of modern Israel, but from Egypt. At present, Britain is blamed by Palestinian activists for the background to the present situation, and the British rule from 1918 to 1948 was indeed eventually a period of grave difficulty. Ironically, however, the impression now created is seriously mistaken, for the rule of what was called Palestine, under a League of Nations mandate, was not the British priority in the Middle East.

Instead, that was Egypt, and British forces advanced into Palestine in World War One as a consequence of the protection of Egypt from Turkish attack, rather than in pursuit of some master-plan for expansion.

Egypt was crucial because of the geostrategic location of the Middle East. For Britain, this was a matter of the route to India. That had become more important as the British presence there dramatically increased from the late 1750s, with Bengal under effective control from 1765, Mysore conquered at the end of the century, and the Marathas heavily defeated in 1803. The route to India was of central interest prior to the opening of the Suez Canal (built in 1859-69), with Britain’s first major position in the Arab world being Aden, occupied in 1839. Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt in 1798, an invasion explicitly launched as part of a plan to advance French interests toward Egypt, fired British concern, leading to a successful British invasion in 1801 and the defeat of the French. A less successful intervention was launched in 1807, but in 1882, at Tell El Kebir, Garnet Wolseley inflicted a heavy defeat on the Egyptians, beginning a period of British control that lasted until the Egyptian nationalisation of the Suez Canal in 1956, a step that led to the unsuccessful invasion of the Canal Zone by Britain and France later that year.

Compared to Egypt, Palestine was of minor consequence for Britain. It was primarily a forward buffer. There was none of the emotional investment that had led Richard I and Edward I to campaign there during the Crusades.

Moreover, there was a separate sphere of British activity, that from India,

which had led to a presence in the Gulf and, during World War One, resulted in intervention in Mesopotamia and the eventual establishment of a mandate for Iraq. Again, strategic interests linked to the protection of India were to the fore, interests accentuated prior to the war by concern about German rail plans to the Gulf, and separately and subsequently pushed to the fore by the availability of oil. There was no comparable oil in Egypt or Palestine. Again, Iraq was an area of British commitment until the coup that overthrew the monarchy in 1958, with air bases from which the Soviet Union could be attacked, in addition to oil.

Britain indeed was the major Middle Eastern power until the 1950s, a position owing much to its eventual military success in World War One, in which the British had also conquered Syria and Lebanon, even though France became the mandate power. So also with World War Two, in which the British (including imperial forces) successfully defended Egypt from Italian and German invaders, and conquered Lebanon and Syria from Vichy France and Iraq from a pro-German local government, as well as jointly conquering Iran with the Soviet Union. Thereafter, there was a lessening of British power, although the French withdrawal from Syria and Lebanon in 1946 made Britain even more clearly the major European power in the Middle East. British forces intervened in Jordan in 1958 and Kuwait in 1961, in order to maintain friendly governments in power and resist the pressures of Pan-Arabism and both Egyptian and Iraqi expansionism, which were of far greater concerns than developments in and concerning newly-independent Israel.

To present such an account and not therefore discuss the pressures arising in the late 1930s from Jewish immigration and from the large-scale Arab Rising in Palestine in 1936-9 might appear surprising, but it is important to put the situation there in perspective. Both were extremely important as far as the situation there was concerned, and the British deployed a considerable force, but in terms of Britain's wider strategic concerns in the late 1930s, this was of relatively minor significance. This was not least because of the extent to which the states opposed to Britain did not successfully exploit the Rising, even though Italy under Mussolini followed a general policy of trying to foment Arab nationalism. The Peel Commission, which had been established to tackle the linked issues of Jewish immigration and the violently hostile Arab response, recommend the partition of Palestine between Arab and Jewish states.

The report was rejected by Arabs and led to the rising which, initially, posed a

serious problem for the British, not least as, in response to sniping and sabotage, and shortage of information about the rebels, they were unable to maintain control of much of the countryside. The opposition, however, lacked overall leadership and was divided, in particular, between clans. Faced with a firm opposition from about 3,000 guerrillas, the British used collective punishments to weaken Palestinian support for the guerrillas, adopted active patrolling, sent significant reinforcements and reoccupied rebel strongholds. In addition, partition as a policy was abandoned in 1938 and in 1939 a White Paper outlined a new policy: independence in ten years and Jewish immigration limited in the meantime. For the British, the Arab Uprising has to be put alongside the contemporary uprising on the North-West Frontier of India; but both were shadowed by growing concern about Germany, Italy, and Japan.

Halford Mackinder's presentation of geopolitics in 1904 in terms of the Eurasian 'heartland,' and the Russian threat<sup>16</sup> had made the Mediterranean very much part of a wider peripheral offsetting of this threat, one that focused on Britain, British India, and Japan. As shown by Mackinder, the issues summarised as the route to India could therefore be reconceptualised, alongside the apparent geopolitical developments and challenges posed by the Russian advances across Central Asia (however conceptualised) and into Manchuria.

The irony of events saw control over this 'heartland' sought instead by Germany in both world wars. From that perspective, the Mediterranean could appear peripheral to British, and, more particularly, Allied, concerns. This was a response taken by critics to Anglo-French commitments to Gallipoli and Salonica in World War One, and to Greece in 1941, the Italian campaign in 1943-5 and that in the Dodecanese in 1943.

American policymakers were opposed to what they saw and decried as the Mediterranean obsession of British policy and, in 1943, were reluctant to support British plans for an Allied invasion, first, of Sicily and, subsequently, of mainland Italy. The Americans feared that such an invasion would detract resources from the invasion of France (the army's prime concern) and from the war with Japan (the navy's), and also be a strategic irrelevance that did not contribute greatly to the defeat of Germany. Instead, the Americans pressed for an attack on the Ger-

---

16 H. Mackinder, 'The Geographical Pivot of History,' *Geographical Journal*, 23 (1904), pp. 421-44.

man army in France, an attack seen as the best way to use Anglo-American forces to defeat the Germans, and to assist the Soviet Union.<sup>17</sup>

Aside from the justified view that an invasion of France could not be successfully mounted in 1943, British strategic concerns in the Mediterranean, however, were a product not simply of imperial concerns and related geopolitical interests, but also of the legacy, since 1940, of conflict with the Axis in the Mediterranean where the Germans, moreover, could be engaged as they could not then be in Western Europe. The British had military resources in the region, as well as territorial and strategic commitments to protect, notably the Suez Canal; and, not least due to serious pressures on shipping, these resources could not be readily reallocated.<sup>18</sup> Strategic speculation and political commentary are apt to overlook this point. Resources are not easily fungible.

The employment of imperial military resources was particularly notable in this respect. The sensitivity, notably in 1941-2, about the deployment of Australian and New Zealand forces in the Middle East while the two countries were threatened by Japan, had underlined the need for political care in the use of imperial units, and a focus of efforts on northern France could not be permitted to weaken Britain in the Mediterranean. Britain's position in the Mediterranean was, in part, seen as a forward-defence for the Indian Ocean, as were the occupations of Iraq and Syria in 1941, and that forward-defence was important to the politics of imperial commitment. At the same time, the conquest of Lebanon and Syria in 1941 like the attack on the French fleet at Mers-el-Kebir in 1940 was part of an Anglo-Vichy war that was far from restricted to the Mediterranean, but that focused there.

The British preference for an indirect approach, weakening the Axis by incremental steps as a deliberate preparation for an invasion of France, was important. The indirect approach was an aspect of longstanding British strategic culture, powerfully fortified by the lessons of World War One, notably the extremely costly struggle on the Western Front, one that the British did not wish to repeat. There were also concerns about the manpower available: with a smaller population than

---

17 M.A. Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries: the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Grand Alliance, and U.S. strategy in World War II* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 2000).

18 S. Morewood, *The British Defence of Egypt, 1935-1940: Conflict and Crisis in the Eastern Mediterranean* (London, 2004).

America, the Soviet Union or Germany, Britain's potential to field as many divisions was limited, although, until July 1944, Britain and the Empire had more divisions than the Americans in fighting conflict with the enemy. The indirect approach also drew on the benefits of naval power and amphibious capability.

Interest in the indirect approach was not restricted to Britain. In the winter of 1939-40, there was support in France for an expedition to Salonika in northern Greece in order to maintain Allied influence in the Balkans. The British were then opposed to such an expedition, for both military and political reasons, notably the risk of starting a war with Italy.<sup>19</sup> In 1940, the fall of France and Italy's entry into the war dramatically took forward the indirect approach. It faced a major failure, however, in April 1941 when forces were sent to Greece in a totally unsuccessful attempt to help resist German invasion. Winston Churchill backed the policy for political reasons, in order to show that Britain was supporting all opposition to the Axis, but he swiftly recognised it as an error. The dispatch of forces there greatly weakened the British in North Africa, making them more vulnerable to German intervention there.

The indirect approach was also a response to the specific military circumstances of 1942-3. The British were concerned that a direct attack across the English Channel would expose untested forces to the battle-hardened Germans. Their experience of fighting the Germans in 1940-1, in Norway, France, Greece, and North Africa, in each of which British forces had been defeated, had made British policymakers wary of such a step until the Germans had been weakened. The bloody failure of the Dieppe Raid on the North French coast on 19 August 1942 underlined the problems and uncertainties of amphibious landings on a defended coastline, as well as the prior need to acquire air superiority. Allied success in amphibious operations in the early stages of the war was limited, with the British invasion of Madagascar in 1942 mounted against a far more vulnerable target than occupied France, and benefiting in particular from surprise and good planning.<sup>20</sup>

Later in 1942, the British were successful with the Eighth Army at El Alam-

---

19 R.M. Salerno, *Vital Crossroads. Mediterranean Origins of the Second World War, 1935-1940* (Ithaca, New York, 2002), p. 172.

20 T. Benbow, "'Menace' to 'Ironclad': The British Operations against Dakar (1940) and Madagascar (1942)", *Journal of Military History*, 75 (2011), pp. 807-8.

ein in Egypt, but Bernard Montgomery's victory over the German-Italian force under Erwin Rommel in the battle fought from 23 October to 4 November was greatly assisted by superior air power, and was characterised by a deliberative, controlled style of attack supported by clear superiority in artillery. This was a variant of Allied offensives in 1918. To replicate this style in an amphibious assault on France would not be easy. As far as the alternative was concerned, the difficulties of campaigning in Italy, however, were not appreciated, neither those posed by the terrain nor by the German defenders. After 1945, the British sought to continue their pre-war Mediterranean stance, with troops in the Suez Canal Zone until 1954, and Cyprus and Malta both in the Empire. It was a new, post-imperial agenda that came to the fore from the late 1960s, one owing much to the 'Retreat from East of Suez' seen as the British pulled out of the Indian Ocean, notably withdrawing from Aden in 1967. The Aden struggle had seen Britain opposed to Nasser, the Egyptian nationalist dictator, who was also backing the republicans in Yemen against the Saudi-supported royalists. As a result, Egypt's heavy defeat by Egypt in the Six Days War of 1967 served British interests, just as they had also been served by the Israeli defeat of Egypt in 1956. Alongside a distancing from Britain's earlier role in the Middle East, close links between the Labour-dominated Israeli government and Britain's Labour governments were important to an improvement in relations with Israel. So also with the philo-semitism of Margaret Thatcher. As important from the late 1960s was the pronounced move of the most prominent Palestinian organisations, notably the PLO, to the Soviet side in the Cold War and to the means of terrorism. This strongly affected the attitude of successive British governments, not least because of links between the PLO as well as radical Arab governments, notably Libya, and the terrorism by the Provisional IRA. Moreover, the rise of Likud in Israeli politics in the 1980s was not unacceptable to Mrs Thatcher.

At the same time, Britain was clearly secondary to America on the Western side in the Middle East, a position eased by a significant distancing of France from Israel. It was America that played the key role in rearming Israel after the Six Days War, in assuring that Israel was not isolated when it was attacked by Egypt and Syria in the Yom Kippur/October/Ramadan War of 1973, and in helping Israel achieve peace with Egypt. America became Israel's major arms supplier and supporter. Britain's role in comparison was minor. As America's principal European ally in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, at a time when West Germany was

going in a different direction with *Ostpolitik* and France leaving NATO's military structure, Britain followed the trend of America's policy, even if not all the detainees. More significant in the late 1960s and 1970s was a retrenchment of Britain's geopolitical concerns in response to fiscal strain, NATO responsibilities, and the eventually-successful drive to join the European Economic Community.

Under Thatcher, there was a degree of broadening out, and a more global international stance, but the Middle East continued to be relatively minor compared to the escalation and then resolution of the Cold War in Europe. Britain's principal military commitment in the Middle East between the withdrawal from Aden in 1967 and the Gulf War in 1991 was the provision of forces to help Oman fight a South Yemeni-backed insurrection in Dhofar. This was a successful commitment, one in line with the policies of America, Saudi Arabia, and the Shah's Iran. At the same time, it was a conflict that attracted very little public attention.

The situation changed in the 1990s, with the Iraq War seeing Britain prominently return 'East of Suez' while in Palestine tensions led to the *intifada*, which helped encourage both public attention and attempts to reach a negotiated settlement. Britain encouraged the latter but was not prominent. Instead, in the mid and late 1990s, Balkan crises engaged more attention. In the 2000s, in contrast, the theme of a 'war of civilisation' appeared brought to fruition with the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks (significantly in America and not Europe) followed by the 'War on Terror,' first in Afghanistan and then in Iraq. Britain followed the American lead, which also entailed an alignment with Israel that caused Tony Blair serious problems within the Labour movement in 2006 and helped lead to his fall in 2007.

The 2010s saw continued tensions in Palestine overshadowed by the consequences of the 'Arab Spring.' The British were not significantly involved in the crises in Tunisia and Egypt, but played a key role in providing support to the insurgents in Libya in 2011. In the short term, this contributed to the overthrow of the regime of Colonel Gaddafi, but in the longer term led to protracted instability both there and across the *sahel* belt in Africa, notably in Mali and Niger. The facile optimism shown by David Cameron proved totally misplaced and indicated his deeply flawed grasp of international relations. It was followed in 2012 by Cameron losing control of the House of Commons when he sought to persuade it to back America in a military confrontation with the brutal Assad regime in

Syria. Such action was both limited in prospectus and justified, but Cameron lost control when he unnecessarily turned to Parliament, and the British climbdown undermined the American stance, and thus helped embolden the Russians.

Again, Palestine/Israel was not to the fore in British public discussion of the Middle East, which indeed was the norm other than for particular crises. At the same time, growing criticism of the settlers in the Occupied West Bank affected a swathe of British public debate. Ironically, that was not the case over Gaza, because the Israelis, as part of their drive for peace, evacuated the Gaza Strip and forced the settlers out. That this has not occurred on the West Bank is a fundamental contrast.

And so to the present. Again, the Mediterranean has had inscribed onto it the interaction of local conflicts with wider rivalries and Great Power strategies, as in former Yugoslavia in the 1990s and Syria in the 2010s. The language of geopolitics has been pushed far much to the fore in recent years; but it is the politics rather than the geography that is really at issue, as with the civil war in Libya. So also for example with the current crisis not least with Israel's military and political commitment to retaining some of the land conquered in 1967. Geopolitical factors focused on security constituted a prominent Israeli argument against the demand that Israel should return occupied land. For example, the argument used to be that the Golan Heights gained in 1967 (as opposed simply to the positions from which Israel was shelled up to 1967) should be kept because, from Mt Hermon, it was possible to look deep into Syria and Lebanon and keep an eye on Syrian preparations to attack, and also that, with the tank being the backbone of the army, the Golan had to be retained to provide space for concentrating forces and for manoeuvre. These arguments are still made, but they are now less valid as it is possible to look into Syria from space, while, with attack helicopters, Israel does not need the land to the same extent for manoeuvring. Moreover, with the Israeli doctrine of warfare becoming more similar to the American concept of Rapid Dominance, and with firepower replacing concentration of forces, land, while still significant, is less clearly important than hitherto in military operations.

The same is the case with the West Bank. Immediately after its conquest and occupation in 1967, the Israelis came up with the Allon Plan (drafted in June 1967) to keep much of the West Bank and to build settlements along the River Jordan in order to stop a potential attack by an Eastern Bloc of Syria, Iraq and Jordan. However, missiles do not really care much about such buffer zones, and the strategic, operational and tactical arguments for such a zone was challenged by the use of rocket attacks on Israeli cities, a policy that began with Iraqi Scud



attacks in 1991. In turn, the arguments employed were qualified by the Israeli use of an 'Iron Dome' interception system to block most attacks, notably during the Gaza crises of 2014 and 2024. As far as the idea of a buffer is concerned, there were also inconsistencies. One neighbour, Jordan, has peaceful relations with Israel, while hostile Iran lacks a common border with her.

The changing validity of a military strategic rationale for continued Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Golan Heights throws attention back onto political debates within Israel focused on the need for, and value of, Jewish settlements in the occupied territories, and on the nature of peace that might be possible, and the role of Israeli withdrawal in such a peace settlement.

The angry response on the Left to Tony Blair over Israel's bombing of Lebanon was a precursor to current demonstrations. The scale might be very different, but the latter were prefigured by those against the 2003 Iraq War. In contrast, there was nothing of comparable substance against the 1991 Iraq War nor the murderous Syrian policy toward Syrians over the last eleven years, nor indeed that of the Sudanese regime in South Sudan and Darfur. So on for other groups who have suffered, such as Kurds at the hands of Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran.

These and other contrasts invite consideration. In part, there is doubtless a degree of antisemitism that has become more apparent on the Left since elements of it embraced Palestinian terrorism from the late 1960s. In this respect, Hamas is simply another iteration, albeit one that is more 'Islamic' than those earlier movements. Indeed, there is an echo of Cold War attitudes and propaganda, as with many other issues at present. This was very much not the early stage of the Cold War, a stage more closely seen with recent and current Russian support for Syria and alignment with Iran. Instead, the 'Global South' Propaganda of Mao Zedong, and the latter stage of the Cold War was the key background to the situation at present.

The contrast in 2023-4 essentially arises as a consequence of the large number of Muslims who live in Britain and their determination to take an activist stance. This is very different in its scale to previous displays of activism and brings to the fore a political consequence of the recent mass-migration and its impact on both the politics of geopolitics and the geopolitics of politics. Instructively, this is different to other instances in which Muslims have been persecuted, from Bosnia to Xinjiang. In part, this contrast is a reflection of the salience of the issue but the

linkage with Left-wing mobilisation is also pertinent.

That a discussion of long-term British geopolitical engagement with the Mediterranean should end with the demonstrations in London in 2023 may appear presentist as well as problematic, mistaking the demonstrations of the minority for the views or engagement of the majority. Certainly, there is no sign that the issue trumps Britain's strategic interests in the region, interests currently centred on following the American lead and supporting both stability and allies. How these will be advanced in the years to come is unclear.

These points serve as a reminder that the geopolitics of a particular question has a number of, often clashing, angles. The political nature of the perception of these and other geopolitical issues underline the need for a flexible approach to the subject. In the case of the Mediterranean, it was scarcely surprising that an outside power saw its geopolitics primarily in terms of wider strategic concerns, anxieties and possibilities. That, however, does not lessen the value of that perspective, for there is no one way to assess geopolitical issues. Instead, the British perspective contributes to a whole that is at once greater and yet fragmented as a result of these many perceptions.



A Smart Macaroni, Caricature from “Martial Macaroni”, in Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection. Courtesy by Brown University (see West, «The Darly Macaroni Prints and the Politics of “Private Man.”», *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 25.2 [2001], pp.170-1.

# Storia Militare Moderna

## Articoli / Articles

- *Swiss Cavalry from c.1400 to 1799*,  
By JÜRIG GASSMANN
- *Gian Andrea Doria e Uluç Ali a Lepanto. Una riflessione sulla tattica di battaglia tra flotte di galee nel Mediterraneo del XVI secolo*,  
DI EMILIANO BERI
- *La présence de la Milice Chrétienne en Europe Orientale (1618-1621). Samuel Korecki et ses lettres à Charles de Gonzague duc de Nevers*,  
PAR EMANUEL CONSTANTIN ANTOCHE
- *Hamilton's Expedition of 1639: The Contours of Amphibious Warfare*,  
BY MARK CHARLES FISSSEL
- *La escuadra del reino de Sicilia en la defensa conjunta del Mediterráneo hispánico (1665-1697)*,  
POR MARÍA DEL PILAR MESA CORONADO
- *"No tan en orden como devria estar". La correspondencia entre*

- el duque de Osuna y Felipe III sobre el Tercio de infantería del Reino de Sicilia*,  
POR AITOR AGUILAR ESTEBAN
- *Les campagnes du comte Jean-Louis de Rabutin*,  
BY FERENC TÓTH
- *Les officiers généraux de la 'nouvelle marine' néerlandaise 1652-1713*,  
PAR ROBERTO BARAZZUTTI
- *The Serenissima's Cretan Swansong: the Loss of Souda (September 1715)*,  
BY DIONYSIOS HATZOPOULOS
- *Tra guerra e diplomazia. Assedi e capitolazioni della Cittadella di Messina durante la Guerra della quadruplice alleanza*,  
DI ANTONINO TERAMO
- *Un'impresa straordinaria: i primi affreschi di Ercolano salvati dal tenente d'Artiglieria Stefano Mariconi*  
DI ANIELLO D'IORIO

- *La prigionia di guerra nell'Europa delle Successioni tra diritto bellico e prassi militare*,  
DI ALESSANDRA DATTERO
- *La prima campagna d'Italia di Bonaparte come guerra d'intelligence*,  
DI GIOVANNI PUNZO
- *The Long Route to Egypt From Saint Louis to Bonaparte*,  
BY EMANUELE FARRUGGIA

## Insights

- *Mediterranean Geopolitics: A British Perspective*,  
BY JEREMY BLACK
- *Secret History. An Early Survey*,  
BY VIRGILIO ILARI
- *Four Recent Essays on Amphibious Warfare between the XVI and the XVIII Centuries*,  
BY MARCO MOSTARDA

## Recensioni / Reviews

- C. Martin & G. Parker, *Armada. The Spanish Enterprise and England's Deliverance in 1588*,  
(DI GIANCARLO FINIZIO)
- Enrique Martínez Ruiz, *Las Flotas de Indias. La Revolución que cambió el mundo*,  
(DI SIMONETTA CONTI)
- Stefan Eklöf Amirell, Hans Hägerdal & Bruce Buchan (Eds.), *Piracy in World History*  
(DI STEFANO CATTELAN)
- Ferenc Tóth, *Silva Rerum. Études sur la circulation de la noblesse et ses idées en*

- Europe à l'époque des grands changements*,  
(PAR CLÉMENT MONSEIGNE)
- Dionysios Hatzopoulos, *La dernière guerre entre la république de Venise et l'empire Ottoman (1714-1718)*,  
(BY STATHIS BIRTACHAS)
- Federico Moro, *Dalmazia crocevia del Mediterraneo*,  
(DI VIRGILIO ILARI)
- Olivier Chaline et Jean-Marie Kowalski, *L'amiral de Grasse et l'indépendance américaine*,  
(DI GIOVANNI ZAMPROGNO)

- Roger Knight, *Convoys. The British Struggle against Napoleonic Europe and America*,  
(DI GIANCARLO FINIZIO)
- Paolo Bonacini, *Un Ducato in difesa. Giustizia militare, corpi armati e governo della guerra negli stati estensi di età moderna*,  
(DI MARTINO ZANARDI)
- Jonathan Jacobo Bar Shuali, *Breve historia del Ejército napoleónico*,  
(POR M. SOBALER GOMEZ)